

Yilmaz forced to seek new vote

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's constitutional court on Tuesday struck down the parliamentary vote of confidence that installed the current right-wing coalition government. The government won a majority of those deputies who actually cast ballots in the March 12 vote, but the court said that in fact it needed an absolute majority of all seats in the legislature. Two lawyers consulted by AFP said the ruling means the government will have to seek a new vote of confidence. It will have to wait for the decision to be published in the official government bulletin, then seek a vote. Until then the government remains in power. The court also struck down two other votes by parliament. One extended the state of emergency in mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey where separatist rebels are active, and the renewed government permission for Western countries to use Turkish bases for air patrols to protect Kurds in northern Iraq. In all three cases, the court was acting on a suit filed by the Islamic Welfare Party, which argued that the modalities of the votes were unconstitutional.

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Blast in Aden kills 7 soldiers

ADEN (AFP) — At least seven Yemeni soldiers were killed and 21 others wounded when a munitions dump at an army barracks exploded before dawn Tuesday, hospital officials said. Colonel Abdul Aziz Al Dhabab, commander of a brigade in the area outside the southern city of Aden, said the explosion was caused by a short circuit which started a fire where munitions were stockpiled. The commander of Saba Barracks, four kilometers from the Aden oil refinery, was killed in the explosion and 11 of the injured were in serious condition and were to be transferred to the capital Sanaa, he said. Four charred bodies were transferred to Al Jumbouriyah hospital in Aden, hospital director Mohammad Chamseddine told AFP. A hospital near the refinery received 24 burned soldiers, three of whom died, hospital officials added. An unknown number of soldiers were also rushed to military hospitals, witnesses said.

First ladies open meeting on development of rural women King, Queen urge focused efforts and policies that help advance the status of women in the countryside Pluralism, democracy basic requirements, HM tells conference 'Feminisation of poverty' is not acceptable — Queen

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first ladies of 15 countries, hundreds of delegates and representatives of U.N. and non-governmental organisations on Tuesday opened a meeting here on the development of rural women with calls by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor against "feminisation of poverty" and focused efforts to improve the status of rural women.

The King and Queen, speaking at the opening session of the International Steering Committee (ISC) on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, also emphasised the need for gender-equitable human development.

King Hussein pointed out that 70 per cent of the world's

poor are women and 550 million of them live in the countryside, and that further statistics also "reveal that over the past two decades 50 per cent of them have sunk below the poverty line."

Commenting on these "alarming figures" and praising the ISC and other U.N. agencies and bodies concerned with human rights involved in the "formidable challenge" of rural women development, the King affirmed that democracy, pluralism, peace and stability were basic requirements for development.

King Hussein stressed the need for coordinated international efforts and development policies. "Development policies and political decisions in one state may have adverse impact on another

(Continued on page 7)

Disturbing statistics on status of women

IN HER opening speech and in comments in working session of the meeting of the International Steering Committee (ISC) on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, Queen Noor provided a host of significant statistics related to the status of women around the world, with particular focus on those who live in the countryside.

The facts and figures cited by the Queen included:

— U.N. studies show that providing women with 10 years of education has a more direct impact on child mortality than doubling income or providing sanitation and piped water.

— Of the one billion poor people in the world, some 80 per cent live in rural areas, and 70 per cent of them are women.

— In the last two decades, the number of rural women living below the poverty line has increased by 50 per cent.

— In larger Arab World countries female illiteracy ranges from 50 to 70 per cent.

— Forty per cent of rural women work on their family farms without wage payments.

— In 1990 only about five per cent of the \$5.8 billion in multilateral bank loans allocated to agriculture and rural development

in the South reached rural women.

Achievements in Jordan in the last two decades, the Queen said, included:

— Doubling of women's participation in the labour force.

— Increasing from zero income to about \$300 per month in the salaries of the women included in the various micro projects established in the Kingdom.

— Female illiteracy has been more than halved (from 48 to 20 per cent).

— In 1995 the first female mayor was elected in a rural area.

— Ten women were elected in 1995 in municipal position (F.C.).



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, along with Queen Fabiola of Belgium and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti on Tuesday attend the opening session of the 1996 meeting of the International Steering Committee for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women (Photo by Crystal)

Refugees determined to secure their rights through peaceful means, team says after visiting camps in Jordan

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — During visits to several Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, delegates from the Refugee Working Group (RWG) of the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process heard the people's strong commitment to the principle of the right of return and peaceful means to achieve RWG's goal-holder said on Tuesday.

Andrew Robinson, director general for the Middle East peace process at the Canadian Ministry of Foreign

Affairs and International Trade, said the delegation heard from Palestinian refugees "repeated strong affirmation of their commitment to the principle of the right of return."

Speaking on behalf of the RWG delegation, which represents one of the five multilateral working groups, Mr. Robinson said that he thought "members of the mission were struck by the emphasis throughout, on the attachment of Palestinians to peace, and to the achievement of their goals by peaceful means."

In the last session of the RWG, a mission was mandated to visit camps in Jordan and to meet government officials. The intention was to learn what people thought the group should be doing vis-a-vis the Palestinian refugee population in the Kingdom.

This mission is the second of its kind made to Jordan: a delegation led by Mr. Robinson's predecessor visited camps in 1994.

Part of the mission's objective was to demonstrate the importance of the international

(Continued on page 7)

King receives Bahraini official

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received Sheikh Isa Ben Rashid Al Khalifa, president of Bahrain's Youth and Sports Corporation, who conveyed to the King greetings and appreciation of the Bahraini emir and crown prince support for Jordan's role for the security and stability of Bahrain. King Hussein voiced Jordan's pride in Jordanian-Bahraini relations and stressed the need to develop these relations in all fields, particularly in youth and sports affairs. The audience was attended by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Youth Minister Mohammad Dawoudieh and the Bahraini ambassador in Amman.

Crown Prince visits armed forces units

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday visited several Armed Forces units and was briefed on their role and duties. The Crown Prince's tour included a visit to Prince Faisal Technical Workshops where he was briefed on their role and duties assigned to them. Prince Hassan also visited Al Hussein Central Workshops, the Royal Military Academy's computer training centre, the Field Surveillance Battalion and Abdullah Ben Al Hussein Infantry School.

Abbas: No peace accord without Jerusalem as capital

BEIRUT (AP) — A senior Palestinian negotiator said Tuesday that his team would not sign a final peace treaty with Israel if it did not recognise East Jerusalem as a capital for the Palestinians. The negotiator, Mahmoud Abbas, also called for a full Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian areas occupied in the 1967 Middle East war and for refugees to return home. The Palestinians are the key element in any permanent peace settlement in the Middle East, said Mr. Abbas, who leads the Palestinian negotiating team in the "final status" talks between Israel and Palestinians. "This is the trump card in our hands. Without the Palestinians, the region will return to chaos," Mr. Abbas told the Beirut independent daily Al Nahar in an interview in Cairo.

Israelis continue attacks on Hizbollah

MARJAYOUN (Agencies) — Israeli forces pounded suspected Hizbollah targets in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, apparently in preemptive attacks to thwart any possible guerrilla activity, security sources said.

Pro-Israeli militia sources said Israeli soldiers clashed with guerrillas on the edge of Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone, killing one guerrilla.

The South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia sources said a group of guerrillas fired with machineguns and rocket propelled grenades at an Israeli patrol near the village of Talloussa in the central sector of the border zone.

The Israelis fired back, killing one fighter, the SLA sources said.

It was not known immediately which group carried out the attack. In Beirut, the pro-Iranian Hizbollah said its gunmen shelled an Israeli post and a tank at Sojoud on the edge of the border zone and some 25 kilometres north of Talloussa. The attack was not immediately confirmed by SLA sources.

In Israel, the army said Israeli soldiers on patrol in the zone's central sector killed one guerrilla.

On Sunday, five Israeli soldiers were wounded in two attacks by Hizbollah, which is fighting to oust Israel from its occupation zone in South Lebanon.

Israeli jets raided Hizbollah targets north of the zone after the Sunday attack and a helicopter also raided Hizbollah targets on Monday.

The Sunday attacks were the first to inflict casualties among Israelis since an April 27 ceasefire ended 17 days of warfare between Israel and Hizbollah.

The Israeli shelling began late Monday and was continuing shortly after midday (0900 GMT) Tuesday.

The fighting heightened tension on the volatile border region as Washington hosted a meeting to make another attempt to set up a five-nation group to monitor the April 26 ceasefire. A meeting last week failed to reach agreement among France, the United States, Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

New violence casts shadow on Peres' election campaign

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The slaying of a Jewish settler by suspected Palestinians and a resumption of anti-Israeli attacks in Lebanon cast a shadow Tuesday over the election campaign of Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

But pollster and other analysts agreed that the violence had not yet reached a level likely to have a dramatic impact on the outcome of the May 29 national polls.

Political violence has taken centre stage in the campaign as the right wing accuses Mr. Peres and his Labour Party of undermining Israel's security by granting autonomy to Palestinians and seeking hasty peace deals with Arab states.

Tensions rose a notch on Monday when an Israeli-American religious student was shot and killed by Palestinians who opened fire with automatic weapons at a group of youths outside a

Jewish settlement near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

The previous day five Israeli soldiers were wounded in the buffer zone Israel occupied in south Lebanon when guerrillas attacked their patrol in the first clash since a ceasefire agreement ended 17 days of cross border fighting last month.

Also Monday Israeli police announced that they had arrested a Palestinian man trained in Syria to carry out a suicide bombing against an Israeli target.

Four such suicide attacks by militants in February and early March killed 63 people and wiped out Mr. Peres' lead in opinion polls over his right-wing challenger for the job of prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli army has arrested several Palestinians following Monday's shooting. Palestinian and Israeli sources said

An Israeli army spokesman said five men "suspected of terrorist activities" were arrested overnight in the village of Koubar, about eight kilometres northwest of the Beit El settlement where Monday's shooting occurred.

Two other men were detained in a village near Tul-karem in the north of the West Bank.

"At the time of their arrest, the suspects were in possession of arms and nationalist literature," the spokesman said.

Palestinian sources said the men arrested in Koubar were known as members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and were suspected of links to Monday's attack.

Mr. Peres, meanwhile, accused Iran of pursuing efforts to organise attacks in Israel to influence the outcome of the national elections.

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq seeks help in oil talks

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz urged the international community on Tuesday to help seal Iraq's "oil-for-food" negotiations with the United Nations, the official Iraq News Agency (INA) reported.

Mr. Aziz called on the international community to "support the U.N. secretary general against U.S. interference aimed solely at causing the negotiations to collapse."

During a meeting with a French parliamentary delegation headed by Yves Bonnet, Mr. Aziz insisted the continuation of the U.N. embargo against Iraq was aimed at "satisfying the United States which wants to keep up (the embargo) for spurious political reasons."

The fourth round of talks between Iraqi officials and the United Nations on an oil-for-food deal to ease the sanctions, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, began on May 6 in New York. Talks first started in February.

"The fourth round of Iraq-U.N. talks must be decisive, whatever the result," the offi-

cial Al Jumbouriyah newspaper said Tuesday. "The time factor will no longer play in our favour as was the case until now."

It said the economic problems caused by the six-year oil and trade embargo were increasingly taking their toll. "The economic situation in Iraq in the last few years is a danger we cannot ignore."

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Monday more work needed to clinch a deal. Al Jumbouriyah said the same day that the talks were going well but warned they could still fizzle if the United States and Britain were able to add conditions to a draft memorandum of understanding.

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Amman - Jordan



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2 Arfan Al-Hani MD. Cardiology	U.S.A.	19 Gert Mahr MD. Orthopedic Surgeon	Germany
3 Ozama Al-Mefty MD. Neurosurgeon	U.S.A.	20 Amel Nakas MD. Nephrologist	U.K.
4 Milne Anderson MD. Neurologist	U.K.	21 Baharut N. Nakhwani MD. Pathologist	U.S.A.
5 David Barrett MD. Urologist	U.S.A.	22 William Oberheim MD. Urologist	U.S.A.
6 William Castelli MD. Cardiology	U.S.A.	23 Constantine Felkis MD. Hematology	Greece
7 Richard Collins MD. Ophthalmology	U.K.	24 Mark Blake MD. Gastroenterology	U.K.
8 M. Dilloa MD. Pathologist	U.K.	25 Mad J. Rasmussen MD. Urologist	Germany
9 Georges El-Khouory MD. Radiologist	U.S.A.	26 K. Virginia Ruth PhD. Nursing	U.S.A.
10 M.J. Goggins MD. Neurologist	U.K.	27 H. Stannenberg MD. Nephrologist	Austria
11 Halder Ganssma MD. General & Vascular Surgeon	U.S.A.	28 B. Van Steenberghe MD. Dentist	Belgium
12 R. Grouer MD. Plastic Surgeon	Germany	29 A.A. Tajik MD. Cardiology	U.S.A.
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14 Uwe Heermann MD. Neurologist	Germany	31 John Tripp MD. Paediatrics	U.K.
15 Mark S. Huberman MD. Oncologist	U.S.A.	32 J.C.B. Wells MD. Anaesthesiology	U.K.
16 John Kassis MD. Internist	U.K.	33 Christopher J. White MD. Cardiology	U.K.
17 John Kenwright MD. Orthopedic Surgeon	U.K.	34 M. Gazi Yasargil MD. Neurosurgeon	U.S.A.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

I. Philadelphia Hotel Wednesday 15th May			
Time	Hall A	Hall B	Hall C
Morning	General Medicine	Urology	Gen. & Ped. Surgery
	General Medicine	Neurosurgery	General Surgery
After Noon	Urology	Neurology	Ophthalmology
	Urology	Psychiatry/Child Rehabilitation	
Thursday 16th May			
Time	Hall A	Hall B	Hall C
Morning	General Surgery	Oncology	Paediatrics
	Nephrology	Orthopedic Surgery	Paediatrics
After Noon	Nephrology	Plastic Surgery	Orthopedics
	E.N.T.	Obst. & Gyn.	Orthopedics
Friday 17th May			
Time	Hall A	Hall B	Hall C
Morning	Laboratory	Obst. & Gyn.	Radiology
	Laboratory	Anaesthesia	Radiology
After Noon	Nursing	Pharmacy	Anaesthesia
	Dentistry	Cardio-Vascular	Gastroenterology
II. King Hussein Medical Center Thursday 16th May			
Time	Farah Auditorium		
2:00-4:00 p.m.	Cardiology		
4:00-5:30 p.m.	Jordan-Mayo Scientific Teleconference (Atrial Fibrillation)		
5:30-6:15 p.m.	Cardiology		

Norwegian observers arrive in Hebron

HEBRON (AFP) — A group of 32 Norwegian observers arrived here Tuesday in a first step towards implementing the promised Israeli handover of most of this flashpoint city to the Palestinian autonomy government.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal, who visited Hebron to launch the mission, said their role would be to monitor and report on the actions of Jewish settlers and Palestinians.

"They are not an armed force or a police force. They are here to create confidence (and) should not interfere physically," he told a press conference.

Under peace agreements, the Israeli army is to turn four-fifths of Hebron over to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), leaving a small force to guard around 400 militant Jewish settlers living amidst the city's 120,000 Palestinians.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe said he hoped the Norwegians would "create an atmosphere of calm and tranquility and a feeling of security on the part of Palestinian citizens which will help to return life to normal" in Hebron.

"This is good news for the beginning of the redeployment in Hebron," said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The group will begin patrolling Wednesday in key trouble spots, notably around the city's market near settler houses, said Odd Wibe, Norway's ambassador to Syria and Lebanon who is heading the observer force.

"The reason for U.S. being here is to concentrate on areas where tensions are highest, like the marketplace and areas close to the Ibrahim Mosque," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres delayed the pull-out in March following a

spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants in Israel. With an election coming up on May 29 against the right-wing Likud party, Mr. Peres has decided to postpone the pullout again, until after the poll. He is worried his government would be blamed for any security problems related to the redeployment.

Before travelling to Hebron to discuss the observer mission with Mr. Natshe, Mr. Godal met Mr. Peres, in West Jerusalem. He went to Gaza City late Tuesday for talks with Mr. Arafat.

Most of the observers have military or police backgrounds and have served in other conflicts, including Bosnia, but will not be armed for their Hebron duties, he said. One, Astrid Lydersen, is a librarian.

"This can be very exciting," Mr. Lydersen told reporters. "Our task is to drive around in town to show we are here and this can help

calm down the situation."

The observer force is modelled on the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) deployed from May to August 1994 after a Jewish settler massacre at the Ibrahim Mosque.

Palestinian supporters of Mr. Arafat have welcomed the mission, but Jewish settlers say they hope the Norwegian stay will be brief.

The settlers hung up signs in Hebrew, English and Norwegian saying: "The Jewish people in Hebron, living here for 4,000 years, wish you a pleasant stay as tourists but not as observers."

Meanwhile, General Oren Shohar, the coordinator of Israeli activities in the Palestinian territories, met Palestinian officials in Hebron to begin planning for the handover of certain civilian powers to the Palestinians prior to the army withdrawal, now expected in mid-June.

U.S. asks Sudanese diplomat to leave

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Sudanese diplomat has been ordered to leave the United States because of his government's refusal to surrender suspects in an assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last year in Ethiopia.

Al-Sadiq Bakheet Al-Faki, Sudanese embassy information officer in Washington, confirmed by telephone that he will return to Sudan later this week after four years in the United States.

The State Department notified Sudanese Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim that his information minister is being given seven days to leave the country. His identity was not disclosed but press reports in Egypt identified him as Mr. Abdullah.

The U.S. action was an outgrowth of a U.N. Security Council resolution approved last month.

On a vote of 13-0, China and Russia abstaining, the council on April 26 called on governments to "significantly reduce the number and the level of the staff at Sudanese diplomatic missions" and restrict their movements.

The Sudanese diplomat was accused of "facilitating terrorist activities" — including giving shelter and sanctuary to "terrorists."

On Friday, Mr. Abdullah was given seven days to leave the United States, a U.S.

official said. "I will make the deadline," Mr. Abdullah said.

Declining to comment on the affair that abruptly ended his Washington tour, he added diplomatically, "I look forward to returning to my country after some of my best experiences here."

Under the sanctions of the Security Council, Sudanese diplomatic staff and family members are now required to give at least 48 hours' advance notice when travelling more than 40 kilometres outside Washington or New York, said the U.S. official, talking on condition of anonymity.

Last month, the United States ordered a Sudanese second secretary at the United Nations to leave the country, accusing him of helping extremists who plotted to blow up the United Nations and other New York landmarks.

At the time, Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad-Taha called the expulsion of the diplomat "unwarranted and unfounded."

The United States has withdrawn its diplomats from Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, saying they could not be adequately protected there. A recent issue of the Washington diplomatic list shows five Sudanese based here, including Mr. Abdullah.

King Fahd refers to Hanish islands as Yemeni territory

JEDDAH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia welcomed a move by Yemen and Eritrea to use arbitration to settle a dispute over Red Sea islands, but referred to them as Yemeni, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said Tuesday.

"Saudi Arabia is glad to see Yemen and Eritrea reach an agreement on arbitration for the Yemeni islands-off-Hanish," King Fahd told the cabinet on Monday during a weekly meeting, according to the official SPA.

French mediators announced on May 1 that Yemen and Eritrea agreed to

submit their dispute over the Hanish islands to arbitration, with the deal to be signed in Paris on May 21.

The long-standing feud over the Hanish archipelago at the entrance to the Red Sea flared into violence in December when Eritrean troops seized the main island of Hanish Al-Kabir after a three-day battle in which nine soldiers died.

After that the two sides maintained a tense armed standoff in the area which is criss-crossed with busy international shipping lanes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King Fahd welcomes Palestinian cabinet

JEDDAH (AFP) — King Fahd welcomed the formation of a Palestinian cabinet in Gaza when he presided over a meeting of Saudi Arabia's government in Jeddah, the Saudi Press Agency said. "The Kingdom of Saudi is happy with the formation of a Palestinian cabinet and hopes it can continue its efforts to meet the aspirations of the Palestinian people in many areas," King Fahd said at a weekly meeting on Monday, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is to chair a meeting Saturday in Gaza city where the new Palestinian cabinet will set out its programme that will be presented Wednesday to the 88-member autonomy council.

Lebanese premier to visit UAE

ABU DHABI (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri will visit the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday to discuss regional affairs with the Gulf Arab state's president, the Lebanese ambassador said on Tuesday. "He will seek Sheikh Zayed's views on the peace process and regional developments and discuss the strong cooperation and close ties between Lebanon and the UAE," Georges Habib Siam told Reuters. "He will also thank president Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan for his and the UAE's support for Lebanon and its stand." Mr. Siam added, Mr. Hariri is trying to rebuild his war-ravaged country but reconstruction efforts took a heavy blow after last month's Israeli bombardment which killed more than 200 people, inflicted more than \$1 billion of damage and forced more than 400,000 people to flee their homes. Mr. Hariri has said Lebanon needed about \$15 billion in public investment "over the years" and was attempting to raise funds internally and through bilateral and multilateral channels.

Senior Egypt adviser heads for U.S.

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's senior adviser Osama Al Baz flew to the United States on Tuesday for talks on the Middle East peace process, government officials said. They said Mr. Baz would spend four days in Washington. He left on the same plane that was taking home U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, who stopped over briefly at Cairo airport at the end of an African tour.

3 Greeks sentenced to life in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian court has sentenced three Greek sailors to life in prison and fined them a total of \$34.5 million for smuggling drugs, officials said Tuesday. The men were convicted Sunday of trying to smuggle seven tons of unidentified drugs into Egypt aboard a boat in 1989. The Greek embassy identified the men as Nicholas Zangelidis, 42, Costas Castanias, 32, and Anastasios Contoyannis, 35. The three men had been in custody since their arrest seven years ago. They are expected to appeal the sentence, which was also handed down on Sunday in the Egyptian Red sea port of Suez.

Retrial in Bosnia aid money abuse case

ANKARA (AP) — An appeals court on Monday ordered a retrial for a Islamist party's bookkeeper convicted of pocketing some \$39 million worth of aid money for Bosnia. Suleyman Mercumeck worked the Welfare Party, the anti-Western, pro-Islamic movement that won parliamentary elections in December. Welfare's platform bragged about an anti-corruption image. The appeals court ruled that Mr. Mercumeck should have been tried by a higher-level criminal court. If convicted, he could get as much as 12 years in prison, conviction of embezzlement by the lower court had brought a four-year sentence. The money was raised at large rallies around predominantly Muslim Turkey by Islamic politicians for Bosnian Muslims.

Seized statue is worth \$67m

CAIRO (AFP) — A gold and gem encrusted Roman statue that an Egyptian businessman tried to sell for \$10 million may be worth nearly seven times that amount, the daily Al-Akhar said on Tuesday. An expert committee gave a preliminary estimate of \$67 million for the bust of a warrior seized by police in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria on Sunday, the paper said. An unidentified businessman "from a prominent Alexandria family" was detained when police discovered he was seeking to sell the statue abroad to a buyer who had offered a price of \$10 million. The 50-centimetre high bust, encrusted with gold, diamonds, rubies, turquoise and agate with a helmet of pearl, had been a gift from an Italian ruler to Egypt's King Fuad, who ruled from 1917 to 1935. The businessman said he inherited the statue from his grandfather who bought it for a public auction of royal possessions in 1957 at a sale price of 3,000 Egyptian pounds (around \$10,000 at the time). Police detained the businessman, who no longer held receipts of the sale, until it could be determined whether the statue legally belongs to him or the state.

Egyptian parties sue to halt privatisation

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian court began hearing on Tuesday, an opposition suit against the government to stop the privatisation of state industries, legal sources said. The heads of the Islamic Labour, the leftist Tagammu and the Nasserist parties filed the suit in a Cairo court against Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri to cancel moves to sell off public sector companies. Their suit was based on the argument that privatisation is against the constitution which calls the public sector "a primary base" of the economy. The case was to continue on June 4. Mr. Ganzouri, who took up his post in January, announced he would give a new push to an economic reform programme launched in 1991. Only a handful of hundreds of state companies in Egypt have so far been sold.

Clinton satisfied with Arafat's charter efforts

WASHINGTON (USIA) — White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said President Bill Clinton was satisfied that Yasser Arafat was seeing to it that references to the destruction of Israel are deleted from the Palestinian covenant. But, citing a debate he said is raging in the Israeli election campaign, he would not definitively choose past or future tense.

Asked if he was saying the covenant has been changed, Mr. McCurry replied, "We believe it has been changed and we don't doubt Chairman Arafat's commitment to making sure that gets done. He did that at some personal risk to himself and it is clear by both his public words and what was said in our meetings here that he is committed to revoking those elements of the covenant."

Told he was answering in part in the past tense and in part in the future tense, Mr. McCurry said, "Our understanding is that those elements have been removed, but added he would 'have to go back and check what the exact procedures are... This is the subject of a highly energetic debate in Israel at the moment and I think you can understand my reluctance to get into it."

Pressed on what Mr. Clinton knew at the time of his statement, Mr. McCurry said, "We had a pretty good read-out of the meetings... and of the steps that they had taken and the specific clauses that they were removing from the covenant itself."

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Turkish prosecutors probe Ciller slush fund charges

ANKARA (Agencies) — Prosecutors opened an investigation Tuesday into a man who boasted that he duped former Premier Tansu Ciller into giving him money from a government slush fund.

The incident surfaced Monday evening when private TV Channel D ran an interview with the man they identified as Selcuk Parsadan.

Mr. Parsadan said he received some \$71,000 after calling Ms. Ciller on behalf of a retired army chief and promising to enure 30,000 residents of an Istanbul district to support Ciller's True Path Party.

Parsadan has already been put on trial on embezzlement charges in two separate cases, the prosecutor's office said. He faces up to 27 years in prison if convicted. There is an arrest warrant for him for eluding a subpoena to testify in the trials.

Ms. Ciller's executive secretary, Akin Istanbul, acknowledged Mr. Parsadan was given the funds, but contended Mr. Parsadan was supposed to use the money to form an association to promote

the ideals of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey.

Ms. Ciller, who faces two corruption probes in parliament, has also been accused of using \$7 million from the slush fund for her own interests just before she left office in March.

Ms. Ciller has denied all the allegations.

Prime Ministers are given a free hand in how they use the slush fund, and by law such spending cannot be investigated.

Ms. Ciller has acknowledged withdrawing \$6.5 million from the fund shortly before handing over power in March but says interests of national security prevent her from divulging what she did with the money.

The Welfare Party, which won the December elections for which she was unable to form a government, introduced the two motions which led to the launch of the inquiries in late April and early May.

The inquiries put a question mark over Ms. Ciller's political future.

Oman optimistic of outcome of Mideast peace process

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The Omani minister of state for foreign affairs believes that the Middle East peace process is irreversible, saying "we strongly believe that we are at the final stage in a long tunnel."

The minister, Yusef Ben Alawi Ben Abdullah, expressed his confidence and optimism about the shape of things to come in the Middle East in appearances before two influential Washington think tanks: the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on May 6 and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies on May 13.

Mr. Ben Alawi has also been meeting with Clinton administration officials and business leaders during his ten-day visit to the United States, which ended Tuesday.

As a result of his trip here, he said he is hopeful that an Omani delegation will be visiting Washington shortly "to develop bilateral economic relations" with the United States. He did not elaborate but Oman has lately been weighing alternate options for economic development in the next 25 years

which exclude dependence on oil revenues.

At the think tanks, Oman was praised for its support of "goals of moderation and stability" in the region and for its cooperation with the United States and its allies, which was said to be "essential in turning aggression, protecting the freedom of the seas and promoting peace throughout the region."

Mr. Ben Alawi, reminding his audiences that Oman was an early supporter of the peace process, asserted that "peace will bring justice to all parties and to all people in the Middle East" so that "terrorism can no longer be sure of its foothold."

He told a questioner that all Arab leaders have considered peace-making and "relations with Israel" as a strategic option. "It is not a tactic."

The minister expressed confidence that the permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians "will have to come to a successful result," maintaining "no one can afford to have a failure."

He argued that the large

participation of Palestinians in the recent elections mean that the Palestinian people want peace — "the period of liberation is over."

After pointing out that there are "substantial levels of confidence" among the present leaders in the Israeli and Palestinian camps, he said he would not be surprised if a Palestinian state were to be established.

He conceded that the "critical point" in the negotiations with Israel is whether Israel withdraws from Arab territories it occupied in the 1967 war. He said, matter of fact, that "Israel clearly understands that it has to withdraw from Arab territory (but) when and how this will (take place) will depend on the parties negotiating."

Mr. Ben Alawi would not be drawn into any discussions on Jerusalem but again expressed confidence that an agreement would be reached between the Palestinians and Israelis on the city; he did not see an alternative to an agreement. "We are convinced that peace is the only venture for both sides," he stated.

The minister said his government, which exchanges trade representation with Israel and has seen visits by two Israeli prime ministers in recent years, is satisfied with the present level of contacts with the Jewish state.

However, he said the relationship with Israel has "the potential to generate significant and tangible economic benefits for both parties."

He said it was Oman's conviction that "political appreciation of the peace process needs to be supported by concrete facts on the ground which would bring the people of the region in cooperative endeavours and establish real economic relations."

At this point, he cited Oman's development of a desalination centre in Muscat through which, he said, his country hoped "to provide at least one possible model of regional cooperation."

Oman's objective, he continued, was to make "an early and constructive contribution... by promoting and supporting multilateral ventures which would promote peace in the context of practical cooperation in economic ex-

changes."

Repeating his government's "endorsement without reservation" of the results of the Sharm Al Sheikh Peacemakers conference, he said there is little that can be done by his country, which maintains diplomatic relations with both Iraq and Iran, until Baghdad and Tehran take "a different approach to develop a stable region."

He nevertheless, maintained that his country believes in pursuing a dialogue with the two countries. He indicated that his country fears that any confrontation would jeopardise the stability and security of the countries of the region. "We are working very hard to have both sides understand that it is very important to maintain peace and stability despite the hard views between the two parties," he said when discussing the U.S. policy goal of "dual containment."

Mr. Ben Alawi added that his country cannot see stability in the region "without Iranian involvement." But he doubted that the Iranian regime would "interfere" should

Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians reach a peace agreement with Israel. Underlining the differences within the Iranian regime, Mr. Ben Alawi said his assessment is that it will be "a long time before we see a unified Iranian policy on the Middle East."

Describing Iraq as "the source of instability in the region," Mr. Ben Alawi said Baghdad has no choice but to implement all the U.N. Security Council resolutions. He said these Omani views were communicated to the President Saddam Hussein regime "publicly and privately."

The Omani minister came out in full support of the Bahrain government's reaction to recent unrest in the island state. He saw the disturbances there as the result of "a terrorist act supported by few individuals who want to speed up history which cannot be the case."

He continued, "The duty of any government is to do whatever it can in order to keep law and order and this is what Bahrain is doing at the moment."

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
15:00	The Flintstones
15:30	Dinosaurs
15:55	The New 3 Stooges
16:00	Bill Nye the Science Guy
16:30	The Secret World of Alex Mac
17:00	News Flash
17:02	Children's Programme — Le Chat
17:30	Serie — L'Insit
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Comedy — Evening Show
20:00	By the Numbers (World Net)
20:25	The Essential History
21:10	Doc — Hunter
22:00	News in English
22:25	The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10	Drama — "Airwolf"
23:55	Are you Being Served
PRAYER TIMES	
04:05	Fajr
05:34	Dhuhr (Shari'ah) Dhuhr
12:32	Dhuhr
14:12	Asr
19:30	Maghrib
20:30	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to drop with skies becoming partly cloudy. There will be a chance for scattered showers and winds becoming westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be north-	
South, Tel. 510790	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 62785.	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 62450.	
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637400.	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrace Church Tel. 623366	
Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541.	
Anglican Church Tel. 632626.	
Anglican Catholic Church Tel. 711331.	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 71261.	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.	
Assam International Church Tel. 625226.	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 85457.	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
Anglican Church Tel. 614190	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
erly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	18/27
Aqaba	23 / 34
Deserts	17 / 29
Jordan Valley	20 / 33
Yesterday's high temperatures:	
Amman 32 Aqaba 36 Humidity	
readings: Amman 18 per cent,	
Aqaba 23 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa	744685
Dr. Osama Al Humairi	847289
Dr. Isam Al Ammar	890504
Dr. Nidal Al Arafat	751672
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdous pharmacy	718336
Al Arcana pharmacy	637025
Naiwouh pharmacy	623672
Al Saban pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	649495
Shamoun pharmacy	637640
Najib pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632
IBRD:	
Dr. Ghazi Ta'mouch	250080
Al Quds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Samir Al Lawad	989501
Khalifah pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	753121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	697467
Complaints	787111
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information	121
(directory assistance)	010230
Overseas Calls	610230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Repairs	6978732
Abdullah Telephone Repairs	661101
Radio Jordan	771111
Radio Jordan	771111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	815615
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-33200
Queen Alia Int. Airport	08-33200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813681/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amr	644281/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mafius, J. Amman	66612373
Al-Ahli, Amman	6641646
Shamoun Hospital	607071



HRH Princess Basma Tuesday presents certificates and token gifts to a young graduate of the Princess Basma Institute for Policewomen (PSD photo)

Police institute graduates 31 new women officers

Princess Basma praises women's contribution to PSD

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — HRH Princess Basma Tuesday presented certificates and awards to 31 graduates of the 33rd class of policewomen to complete the requirements of officer training.

Speaking at a special ceremony, Princess Basma voiced pride and confidence in the newly graduated group.

"Jordanian policewomen have been able to absorb modern technology in police work and were able to enhance their role and expand their participation in all public work," Princess Basma said.

The 31 new officers underwent 18 weeks of training at the Princess Basma Institute for Policewomen (PBIP) at the Jordanian Policewomen Headquarters in Nazal Suburb.

"The institute has become an enormous structure where Jordanian women can prove their potentials and their excellent contributions to serving the society and country," the Princess said.

She wished the graduation group of policewomen success in their future endeavours saying "Your graduation marks the commencement of a new phase in your life to be marked with sacrifice and service for the country."

Commander Captain Kafa Halaseb said during the 18-week training programme, the recruits went through basic military skills and theoretical and practical training in police work.

More than 200 family members watched their young officers in parades, a variety of martial arts exercises and sports shows during the graduation ceremony.

The ceremony held at the Jordanian Policewomen Headquarters, was attended by Interior Minister Awad Khleifat, Public Security Department (PSD) Major General Nasouh Muheideen and senior PSD officers.

Kingdom urges larger investment in Arab insurance markets

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Wednesday urged Arab insurance and re-insurance companies to make larger investments in the Arab states, provide advanced training to personnel employed in the insurance industry and benefit from advanced technology to develop their services.

Depositing for His Majesty King Hussein at the opening of the 21st Conference of the Arab Insurance Federation (AIF), Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb warned that unless Arab insurance firms develop their capabilities and performance, foreign firms will continue to dominate the Arab insurance markets.

The insurance sector in the Arab World has not developed in the past two decades as it's investors would have liked it to, with the result that insurance premiums totalled \$4 billion during that period compared with the international insurance market where the premiums exceeded \$900 billion, noted the minister.

The per capita share in the insurance business of the Arab World stands at \$20 annually compared to the world's average of \$145, said Mr. Abul Ragheb.

He said the low insurance level was due to negligence on the part of the insurance companies in expanding life insurance and personal insurance services.

The minister called for stepped up efforts to spread public awareness in the Arab World about the importance of subscribing to insurance and called for more insurance companies' investments in the Arab states to contribute to socio-economic development.

He said that as the Arab World witnesses rapid economic developments at the local, regional and international levels the insurance sector must meet the needs of that development and economic growth needs at a time when more and more countries are likely to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which opens the door for free trade and increased demand for insurance services.

Furthermore, he said, Jordan along with other Arab states is seeking partnership with the European Union in trade and economic development in the coming two years, and reliable insurance services are required especially with the creation of a free trade zone between the Arab World and Europe.

AFI Secretary General Hussein Nabahani told the



Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Tuesday attends the 21st Conference of the Arab Insurance Federation (Petra photo)

meeting that the federation, which was founded in 1964, now groups 195 Arab insurance companies whose services cover Arab states and beyond.

The three-day meeting entitled: Arab Insurance-2000 and Beyond will discuss the general situation in the Arab insurance markets in the years to come and the

future of Arab insurance industry in light of the creation of the WTO, the role of capital in promoting insurance companies' activities and insurance of property against earthquakes.

Taking part in the meeting held at the Royal Cultural Centre are delegates from 38 Arab and foreign countries.

Engineers look to compete through quality performance

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali Tuesday told a meeting organised by the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) that the coming phase of development and progress in construction and engineering largely depends on the ability to compete and on advanced technology and dedication to ensure high-quality performance.

Engineering firms are called on to develop themselves, acquire advanced technology and adhere to internationally-accepted standards and specifications so that they can compete on the world markets, said the minister at the opening of the meeting held at the Professional Associations Complex.

Quality control of materials used in construction and industry require not only a mere examination of samples but rather examination of various materials throughout the progress of work on any project, he added.

JEA Vice President Hosni

Abu Gheida admitted that some parties have been neglecting quality control largely due to lack of awareness of its importance and lack of strict penalties for violators of regulations.

He demanded that the concerned authorities in cooperation with the JEA should apply stricter rules on those who he said seek profits in the construction business rather than apply the required specifications and quality control rules.

He said it is important that quality control rules be applied to the construction materials themselves and the construction methods to ensure public safety.

Several working papers were reviewed at the meeting dealing with the responsibility of the contractors and engineers, the regulations concerning quality control of materials, the role of the Ministry of Public Works and the JEA in ensuring the application of the right materials, insulation of buildings and quality control in the cement industry.

Srouf arrives in Damascus for APU meeting Arab parliamentarians to discuss restoring solidarity

DAMASCUS (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srouf Tuesday said the Arab Parliamentary Union's (APU) meeting opening in Damascus Wednesday will discuss the question of restoring solidarity among Arab countries and a report by the Arab committee on Jerusalem, among other topics.

Speaking upon arrival in Syria at the head of a parliamentary delegation, Mr. Srouf said Jordan sincerely hopes that the efforts to re-establish solidarity will meet with success because it is of dire importance at present to deal with the challenges facing the nation.

Mr. Srouf said that Arab parliamentarians have a duty to and are capable of helping Arab states to re-establish the aspired solidarity and deal with their common issues.

Mr. Srouf, who is accompanied by a six-member

delegation from the House and the Senate, said the heads of delegations will consult privately in



Saad Hayel Srouf

advance of the opening Wednesday when the delegations will hear a report on the APU General Secretariat's activities last year.

Mr. Srouf, who will deliver Jordan's address to the meeting, said he will take part in laying the cornerstone for the construction

of the APU's permanent headquarters in Damascus.

On Tuesday, Mr. Srouf met at his residence in Damascus with Speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly Abdul Qader Qadoud and exchanged with him views on issues to be discussed at the APU meeting.

Mr. Srouf stressed at the meeting, which was attended by Senator Salem Masaadeh, the Jordanian parliament's keenness to contribute to the success of any such Arab gathering.

In addition to Mr. Masaadeh, the delegation accompanying Mr. Srouf includes as members Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Taher Hikmat, Miflfeh Lawzi, Bader Riyat and Fayyad Jarrar.

Also Tuesday, Mr. Srouf met with Speaker of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) Salim Zantout and reviewed with him issues pertaining to the APU meeting.

Children's rights expressed through music, dance and song Meadows of Dreams a 'must see'

By Ica Wabbah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As part of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) 50th anniversary and the drive to raise awareness and mobilise efforts to guarantee the universal rights of the children, the National Music Conservatory of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and UNICEF Monday staged the musical play "Meadows of Dreams" at Hassan Bin Talal auditorium at the University of Jordan.

Based on the story "Mio, my son", by Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren, the production, brilliantly interpreted by children, tells the story of a daring dream and flying imagination trying to evade the harsh reality of a world that denies children their right to laughter, freedom, parental care and decent living.

The protagonist, a poor, lonely, outcast child who is being raised by adopted parents — behaving as bad as any fairytale stepmother would — discovers, in his dream that darts, that he is the long lost child of a king who rules a beautiful land that lies in the realm of legends and epics. The child is united with his father, the king, and all he had been denied in his days of suffering is now granted him, making him a normal, happy childhood.

Soon, though, he finds out about a land of sorrow and misery, led by a tyrant dictator who had killed the birds and the laughter, the day and the rainbow, the childhood and the happiness. Riding his white horse the child begins the journey to the land of evil that he intends to face

and fight. The acting becomes more dramatic, the forces of evil rally behind him, the dream fights its enemy for a more noble, courageous and beautiful world, one where children should always live in, and it wins.

The play, accompanied by exquisitely executed music — solo instrumental, orchestra, solo arias and choir — is interspersed with beautiful choreography ranging from rhythmic movements to ballet steps and sound and light effects that enhance the acting and provide a colourful, deeply moving background.

The children show tremendous talent that was finely honed over the year the play has been rehearsed.

But acknowledgement and appreciation should be also granted those responsible for the libretto (Dr. Walid Seif, also responsible for the translation into Arabic), music (Kifah Fakhouri, director of the National Music Conservatory), choreography (Inam Abdul Karim) and direction (Jawad Al Asadi), along with the people in the coulisses who made the show a success.

Meant primarily to raise child and adult awareness to the right of the children to a dignified life, the play is a colourful expression of the right to survival, development, protection and participation.

As a token of appreciation for their effort and excellent performance, HRH Princess Alia Al Feisal, deputising for Her Majesty Queen Noor, distributed books to all performing children.

The premiere was on May 13 and six more matinees and evening performances are to be held until May 16.

Refugee Working Group tours Palestinian camps

AMMAN (AFP) — A delegation of the Refugee Working Group (RWG) of the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process has carried out a fact-finding tour of Palestinian camps in Jordan, the team leader said Tuesday.

"We came to hear the points of view of camp residents and of the Jordanian government as to what the RWG should do with regard to Palestinian

refugees in Jordan," Andrew Robinson of Canada told a press conference.

"From refugees we heard repeated strong affirmation of their commitment to the principle of the right of return, attachment to peace and to the achievement of their goals by peaceful means," he said, ending a two-day visit.

The team, which is to report to the RWG's next

plenary session later this year, also held talks with HRH Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

Jordan makes an annual contribution of some \$300 million in infrastructural services to the refugees.

The RWG delegation, including representatives from the European Union, Japan, Morocco, Switzerland and the United States, visited four out of Jordan's

11 camps, which are home to around 1.3 million Palestinian refugees.

With 41 member countries, the RWG was set up as part of the multilateral track of the Arab-Israeli peace process launched in Madrid in 1991. It has so far held eight sessions, the last convened in December in Geneva.

WHAT'S GOING ON

MUSICAL PLAY

* Jordanian grand musical play "Meadows of Dreams" (on children's rights) at Al Hassan Bin Talal Auditorium, University of Jordan at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

FILM

* "Pablo Picasso" (in Spanish with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

* Seminar on the Palestinian-Jordanian relations with the participation of Mr. Sa'ud Al Fayyad, Nazih Abu Nidal, Dr. Suleiman Al Azra', and Dr. Ibrahim Khalid at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Cults and Cult Centres in the Chalcolithic: A New Look at Teleilat Ghassul" by Sandra Scham at the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) at 7:00 p.m. (Tel 846-117).

* Lecture on architecture in Nablus by Bilal Hammad at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Products of Noor Al Hussein Foundation at the Royal Cultural Centre, until May 16.

* Ceramics exhibition at Al Baidar Hall of Kan Zaman (until May 21).

'Visa restrictions, procedures hamper Indian tourism potential'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — There is a strong potential for Indian tourism to Jordan, but visa restrictions and cumbersome procedures are posing a serious obstacle to the Kingdom exploiting the Indian potential, Indian diplomats and officials said Tuesday.

The assertion came on the fringes of an impressive presentation made by India on its own tourism industry and the multi-faceted attractions the country holds out to foreign visitors.

According to S.M. Naqvi, the Dubai-based regional director of the Indian Ministry of Tourism, the number of Jordanian tourists to India rose by about 50 per cent to nearly 3,400 in 1995 while Indian visitors to Jordan numbered 9,800.

But the full potential of Indian tourism to Jordan could not be

realised if the Jordanian authorities continue to insist on lengthy procedures on issuing visas to India passport holders, said Sanjay Panda, deputy chief of mission at the Indian embassy in Amman.

Mr. Panda said it takes more than one month for the issuance of a Jordanian visa to an Indian passport holder.

"We have made representations to the Jordanian government in this regard, but very little has been achieved" in terms of addressing the situation, said Mr. Panda, adding that the "diplomatic understanding" between the two countries were that the issuance of visas would be reciprocal.

More than one million Indians pay visits abroad as tourists every year, and Jordan is one of the new destinations in view of the breakthrough in the peace process, he said.

"But there is little chance for Jordan to exploit the potential if the

issuance of visas is not reciprocal," said the diplomat, adding that the new Indian strategy to issue visas was "across the counter in 15 minutes" to facilitate tourism to the country.

No immediate comment was available from Jordanian officials, but Ministry of Interior officials have said that the ministry had issued a directive through the foreign ministry to all Jordanian embassies abroad that no visas should be issued to nationals of certain countries without prior approval from the ministry. India is one of those countries.

Mr. Naqvi said meanwhile the increase in the number of Jordanian tourists to India indicates that the Kingdom "is perhaps the most growing market" in the region for India as a tourism destination, and the Indian government is determined to exert further efforts to

expand the potential.

While the Ministry of Tourism is not directly involved in the commercial aspects of the industry, said Mr. Naqvi, it would like to facilitate contacts between private sector tour operators in the two countries so as to devise tour packages.

"That is why the delegation that I'm heading here today includes private sector operators who are now negotiating with their Jordanian counterparts on designing special deals for Jordanians interested in visiting India," he said.

Would that mean ads appearing in Jordanian newspapers soon offering full tour packages to India?

"This is up to the tour operators from the two countries," said Mr. Naqvi. "Our role as the Ministry of Tourism is to set up and encourage direct commercial contacts between the two sides."

Bangladesh tornado toll nears 300; search continues

DHAKA (R) — The death toll neared 300 Tuesday after a tornado ripped through the northern Bangladesh district of Tangail Monday night, local officials said.

The officials said 118 people were killed in the police station area of Bashail, 84 in Gopalpur, 54 in Kalihati, 25 in Sakhipur and the rest in other areas. The toll could rise, they said.

At least 5,000 people were injured and hospitals were unable to accommodate the heavy rush, one official said.

"People are desperately waiting for rescue and other help," he said.

Rescuers sifted through rubble and twisted trees, looking for hundreds of people believed missing, witnesses said. At least 50,000 people were made homeless and several villages reduced to ruins, officials said.

Meteorologists in Dhaka said the storm was short-lived but fierce, with winds of up to 150 kph (93 mph).

"Some families have no one left to mourn," a police officer at Barabhatta village told reporters.

"The whole village has diminished into a vast grave," another officer said.

The Bangladesh news agency (BSS) said property losses were huge and damage to crops was substantial. It did not provide any figures.

Officials at Tangail, 120 kilometres from Dhaka, told reporters that many of the injured were in critical condition.

Buses and trucks ferried the injured to civilian and military hospitals in Tangail.



A Bangladeshi mother wails Tuesday over the body of her daughter killed when a severe storm battered their Gopalpur village Monday. Officials say the storm, packing winds up to 150 mph, killed nearly 200 people and left thousands injured (Reuters photo)

and the nearby town of Mymensingh. Many were carried on shoulders or bullock carts, witnesses said.

"The hospitals were full to their capacities and there was hardly any room left," one journalist told Reuters by telephone hours after the storm struck.

More than 2,000 people were brought to a rural hospital at Gopalpur, 60 kilometres from Tangail town, doctors said.

"But we had the capacity to admit only 35 patients," one doctor said.

Hundreds of paramedics and volunteers rushed to the

affected areas early Tuesday, local reporters said.

Witnesses said they had seen many injured still in their homes crying out for help. They said hundreds of soldiers had rushed to villages to help relief operations.

Rescue efforts Monday night were slowed by thousands of tonnes of debris and poor communications, officials said. They said more than 10,000 houses had been damaged.

"Winds, accompanied by rain, started howling in the afternoon but we didn't expect havoc," one man said in Gopalpur. "We heard cries for help from everywhere but could see nothing."

Witnesses said the sky reddened and the air turned hot during the storm, leaving trees scorched.

"The core of the storm lasted only about five minutes but all were finished," said Mohammad Habibullah of Gopalpur, as he wailed over several bodies in his house compound.

"Panic people ran out of their homes and elderly men went to mosques for prayer," another witness said.

Hundreds of buildings, including a cinema and a mosque, collapsed at Barabhatta, where at least 50 bodies were recovered.

Another 50 dead were found at Mantala and more than 30 at Barkhali, two of the hardest-hit villages.

Bangladesh's worst storm in April 1991 killed more than 138,000 people along the coast and on a dozen islands, and caused property and crop losses totalling \$3 billion.



Army troops carry a man injured by a severe storm in Gopalpur, north of Dhaka Tuesday. Nearly 200 people have been killed and 5,000 injured when a severe storm battered Bangladesh on the night of May 13 (Reuters photo)

Japan's Ozawa dismisses rumours of new conservative alliance with LDP

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa Tuesday dismissed rumours of a new alliance with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the biggest party in the ruling coalition.

"At least I have no plans for us to rejoin hands with the LDP," he told a luncheon at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan.

Mr. Ozawa, who has headed the neo-conservative New Frontier Party since December last year, said he still aimed to establish a Japanese political system with two major parties dominating the electoral field.

"That's our goal so it's impossible to return to the past," he added.

The New Frontier Party, formed in late 1994, is an alliance of various opposition groups and is dominated by dozens of disaffected LDP lawmakers including Mr. Ozawa who defected from the conservative party in 1993.

Political analysts have speculated that the New Frontier Party may split and join

forces with the LDP to oust its two junior partners in the ruling coalition, the left-wing Social Democratic Party and the New Party Sakigake.

Under another scenario, younger members of the opposition party are seen forming a new centrist party with New Party Sakigake and others.

But Mr. Ozawa denied that the opposition party was on the verge of falling apart. "There is no such split being discussed by people," he said. "Even after the election, we won't split as we will assume power."

Asked about the timing of the next general election, which has to be held by the middle of next year, Mr. Ozawa said: "The three ruling coalition parties look like they're trying to remain in power for as long as possible."

"But the government will have to think about it when the general session of parliament is convened early next year," he said.

Major underlines French ties

PARIS (AFP) — British Prime Minister John Major denounced the "idiotic integration" of Europe but underlined the strength of Franco-British links in an interview Tuesday to mark French President Jacques Chirac's state visit to London.

In an interview with the French daily newspaper Le Figaro, Mr. Major said relations between the two countries were better than they had been for the last 50 years. Mr. Chirac was due to arrive in Britain early Tuesday afternoon.

"The French and the British have very close links in the matter of defence. We cooperate even more with France than with any other country in Europe and probably the world," the British premier told the paper, according to an unofficial translation by AFP.

Mr. Major also said Britain and France shared the same concept of European Union politics, that there should be a consensus rather than majority voting in the policy-making Council of Ministers.

However, he said he recognised that "there will always be difficulties" between France and Britain, which he described as the two most proudly sensitive of the nation states of Europe.

Mr. Major also categorically rejected a return to the European monetary system. "It is not a question of 'if' nor 'perhaps'. The answer is no, in all circumstances."

But he added: "It's not because we are not following the route of idiotic integration and excessive centralisation that we are anti-European."

On his personal relationship with the French president, Mr. Major said: "I have known Jacques Chirac for a long time. I really like him. We have extremely good relations."

Perry says N. Korean capital is indefensible without landmines

WASHINGTON (AFP) — As a debate raged in the White House over a proposed ban on landmines, Defence Secretary William Perry said Monday that the devices could save tens of thousands of U.S. troops if war broke out in Korea.

Mr. Perry, who took questions after a speech at Harvard University in Boston, strongly suggested that the administration would make Korea an exception to any ban on U.S. use of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Perry's remarks came as the administration neared a decision on a U.S. ban on anti-personnel landmines, which has been the focus of intense internal debate within the administration.

"The president's advisers are close to agreement, but they are not quite there yet," said army Lieutenant Colonel Nancy Burt, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

In Boston, the defence secretary said the United States would be unable to defend Seoul without the liberal use of landmines.

"If we were to, say, eliminate all the landmines that are now deployed in Korea, and a war were to start there, it would mean the deaths of tens of thousands of American soldiers, of hundreds of thousands of civilians," he said.

Without landmines, U.S. and South Korean forces would be forced to retreat south of Seoul in the face of a North Korean invasion.

"North Korea has 1.1 million men under arms located within 60 miles of the DMZ, and if they send those 1.1 million men South there will be carnage, believe me," he said.

Having said that, Mr. Perry added that landmines were an "abomination and we must find a way of getting rid of them."

Pentagon officials would not comment on details of any ban under discussion, but recent reports indicate the administration is moving toward outlawing the use of so-called "dumb mines," which stay active indefinitely, by the end of the century.

The most contentious issues remain whether to make exceptions for the Korean DMZ and the Kuwait-Iraq border as the military would like, and when to extend the ban to so-called "smart mines," which are

designed to self-destruct.

The State Department estimates that 70 people are killed or maimed each week by landmines, and banning them is a cause that has gathered high-powered, bipartisan support here.

Advocates of a ban, led by Senator Pat Leahy of Vermont, argue that any U.S. exception would undercut efforts to achieve an international ban, because every country would demand their own exceptions.

A Pentagon official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the recommendation that the joint chiefs presented to the president Friday "was a draft and has been changed." The draft included exceptions for the Gulf and Korean DMZ.

"The president has met several times with his top military advisers and understands their concerns," the official said. "The military and the president both want a policy that eliminates reliance on landmines without endangering U.S. forces."

"Agreement is likely in a matter of days, not weeks," the official said.

Advocates such as Sen. Leahy, a Democrat, are pushing for a total U.S. ban in 1999, and say Washington needs to take the lead to give momentum to an international ban, which already has the support of 34 countries.

A 53-nation agreement, reached earlier this month at a U.N. conference in Geneva, imposed some limits on the use of anti-personnel landmines, but fell far short of a ban.

It restricts the use of dumb mines to marked areas and requires other mines to be designed to self-destruct within 120 days or less.

The proposal made last week by the joint chiefs was to ban dumb mines in 1999, except in U.N.-recognised DMZs, but not smart mines, which would not be outlawed until there is an international agreement, according to the New York Times.

The issue is a thorny one for Mr. Clinton, who has dealt cautiously with the military since igniting controversy early in his presidency over his stance on gays in the military and his record of avoiding military service during the Vietnam War.

Israelis mugged of \$1m in cash, gems in New York

NEW YORK (R) — Two Israelis were robbed of over \$1 million in cash and jewelry in their Manhattan hotel room Monday, police said. Two white males stole \$975,000 in assorted jewelry and \$30,000 in U.S. currency from a man and woman staying at the Wentworth Hotel in midtown, police said. In late afternoon the robbers knocked on the hotel room's door, pretending to be hotel employees, police said. After the door was opened, they burst in with guns, handcuffed their victims and removed the valuables, police said. The male victim, complaining of difficulty breathing, was treated at a local hospital.

New drug to fight fat

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Monday approved for sale a new drug to combat obesity. Redux, a capsule containing dexfenfluramine hydrochloride, is the first weight loss drug approved in 20 years. "Redux is a new treatment option for many obese Americans who struggle to lose weight and keep it off," said Marc Deitch, a senior vice president at Wyeth-Ayerst which will market the drug. "Having an effective weight loss and maintenance drug helps an individual complement a diet and improve his or her chances for achieving long-term success." The drug, manufactured by the French firm Servier and already available in 65 countries, acts on the brain to reduce appetite, the company said in a statement. The cause of 300,000 deaths a year, obesity is the second biggest killer in the United States, between 58 and 75 million people are seriously overweight.

Woman leaves \$6.5 million to animal home

LONDON (AFP) — A British animal-lover left virtually the whole of her £4.7 million (\$6.5 million) fortune to a home for dogs and cats, under her will. Esme Berni, a widow who died last September, bequeathed the money to Animal Concern, which finds new homes for injured and abandoned pets in the western city of Bristol. Berni, whose husband founded a successful chain of pub restaurants, left another £30,000 to other animal welfare groups. "She was a very private person who had a great love for animals," said a spokesman for Animal Concern. "Times are hard for charities and lots are not surviving. She was so impressed with this charity that she wanted us to carry on well into the future," the spokesman added.

Boy survives 15-minute ride in storm sewer

ERIE, PA (R) — A 12-year-old boy survived a two-and-a-half mile (four kilometre) ride through a sewage drain after falling into a creek here, police said. The boy, Joe Noyer, emerged at the surface after 15 minutes underground near a water treatment plant, where emergency workers were waiting, police Lieutenant Tom Adams said. The sewer, which locals call the tube, is an 18-foot-high, 22-foot wide (five metre by 6.5 metre) culvert carrying storm-swollen Mill Creek through the Great Lakes city of Erie. Noyer fell from his bicycle into Mill Creek Sunday while riding with a friend. He was treated at a local hospital for severe abrasions and then released.

Hong Kong deports over 100 Vietnam boatpeople after riots

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong sent more than 100 Vietnamese boat people back home Tuesday at the start of its largest forced eviction programme, a government spokesman said.

It was the first of a series of repatriations of about 600 people this month alone as officials declared a weekend orgy of violence by boatpeople would not affect plans to speed up the deportations.

As 118 boatpeople were put on trucks at a city prison and driven to the airport to catch a chartered aircraft to Hanoi, police scoured the fire-blackened Whitehead Detention Centre, site of a bloody mass breakout last week, for home-made weapons.

As police moved in, about 200 inmates climbed on the roofs of huts still standing at Whitehead to demonstrate against their impending forced repatriation.

Fire tenders were stationed outside the barbed wire perimeter and helicopters circled overhead keeping close watch on the rooftop protesters.

Meanwhile, a group of 20 young boatpeople transferred from Whitehead to an ordinary prison at the weekend on suspicion of being troublemakers began a hunger strike Tuesday.

"They are just refusing to eat any food given to them," said a prison spokesman, Tommy Chan. The fast was believed to be in protest against the continuing deportations.

This British territory houses more than half the boatpeople incarcerated in Asian detention centres and is hankering to clear its camps before it reverts to Chinese control in mid-1997.

China said Tuesday it was greatly concerned by the weekend rioting and warned that the violence threatened the stability of the territory.

Hong Kong planned to deport more boatpeople Wednesday, and there will be two more flights later this month.

Wide-body DC-10 aircraft have been chartered in order to increase the number of boatpeople carried on each flight, a government spokesman said.

About 50 police and prison officers were injured in the rioting and pitched battles which erupted Friday when boatpeople torched buildings and vehicles before forcing their way through high security fences in a short-lived bid for freedom.

Riot police used more than 1,800 rounds of tear gas to repel waves of rioters armed with home-made spears and clubs fashioned from metal pipes.

Most of the more than 100 boatpeople who escaped have now been rounded up.

Nadine de Lamotte, a medical officer with the French relief agency, Medecins Sans Frontieres, said she and other independent monitors appointed by Governor Chris Patten were able to review the situation hours after the riots.

She called the police actions unacceptable. "Tear gas is usually used on prison populations," Ms. De Lamotte said Tuesday. "But here, there were more than 800 children under fire."

The weekend riots, worst in Hong Kong's recent history, also prompted calls by some for tougher action and for boat people held in the territory to be sent home en masse aboard ships.

Some 30,000 Vietnamese boat people languish in camps across Asia, nearly 18,000 of them in Hong Kong.

All but a handful have been judged to be economic migrants seeking a better life rather than refugees fleeing persecution, making them ineligible for asylum.

Aide: Clinton opposes same-sex marriage

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House said Monday President Bill Clinton opposes same-sex marriages, apparently seeking to defuse a Republican effort to make gay rights a campaign issue.

In stating the position, which officials said Clinton has held since 1992, the White House seemed to be trying to avoid the political beating the president took in 1993 when he sought to overturn the ban on gays serving in the military.

Asked if the president would support legislation that would allow states to decide whether to recognise same-sex marriages, White House spokesman Mike McCurry replied: "The president's against same-sex marriage. We'll have in

look carefully at the legislation that's under consideration."

Mr. McCurry also suggested the president thinks gay marriages undermine families, saying: "He believes that this is a time where we need to do things to strengthen the American family and that's the reason why he has taken this position."

The position, another in a series that moves Mr. Clinton toward the centre, was likely to enrage the gay community, which had strongly backed him as a candidate in 1992.

Mr. McCurry declined to elaborate on why such unions might not promote families, saying he would ask Mr. Clinton for further details on his views.

Last week Republicans introduced a bill in Congress that would prevent states from being forced to recognise same-sex marriages as a result of a pending legal case in Hawaii that may result in that state legally acknowledging such unions.

Under the constitution, the other 49 states would have to accept those marriages as legal and valid.

The bill introduced last week says each state may decide for itself whether to acknowledge gay marriages and defines marriage under federal law as the legal union between one man and one woman.

Gay rights activists have criticised the bill.

Sinn Fein presses Major on N. Irish talks

BELFAST (R) — Nationalist Sinn Fein's top strategist urged British Prime Minister John Major Tuesday to commit himself to "real" peace talks on Northern Ireland in June to win a new ceasefire from the party's IRA guerrilla allies.

Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein, the IRA's political wing, said it would be "unhelpful" if Mr. Major simply restated current British policy in an article on the province's troubled peace process that he is said to be preparing for Belfast and Duhlin newspapers.

Mr. McGuinness, in a telephone interview with Reuters, accused Mr. Major of stalling political progress during a 17 month truce which the Irish Republican Army (IRA) extremists ended in February.

"I think that John Major knows what he has to do ... Stop dithering and convince all of the people of Ireland that real and meaningful peace negotiations are going to begin on June 10 without preconditions and within an agreed time frame."

"A restatement of the British government's position would be most unhelpful because the British government's position has been negative and has failed, thus far, to convince anybody within the (Roman Catholic) nationalist community that what is beginning in June are real and meaningful negotiations..."

Sinn Fein's chief adversary, David Trimble, head of the Ulster Unionist Party, said Mr. Major was planning to set out his Northern Ireland strategy in a newspaper article.



File photo of the Nigerian cargo ship the Bulk Challenge steaming out of Monrovia's Freeport on May 5 with some 3,000 Liberian refugees. Several West African nations have refused to receive the refugees despite pleas by international humanitarian organisations (Reuters photo)

Heavy fighting erupts again in Liberian capital

MONROVIA (R) — Heavy fighting shattered two days of relative calm in Liberia's capital Tuesday, one day after hand-shakes and professions of peace between rival gunmen on a city centre front line.

The U.S. embassy, which is protected by Marines, advised its staff to move around the sea-front compound with extreme caution after fighting swirled up roads towards it.

Witnesses said shooting began before dawn after fighters loyal to Charles Taylor and Alhaji Kromah, his fellow vice-chairman of the ruling Council of State, advanced towards ethnic Krahn rivals in and around the Barclay Training Centre Barracks in the city centre.

The Krahn fighters fought back, driving them back up towards the Graystone compound, which is adjacent to the U.S. embassy and where more than 20,000 frightened civilians have gathered for protection.

The crackle of automatic weapons and the thud of rocket-propelled grenades echoed around the Mamba Point diplomatic district. Witnesses reported further fighting around two major bridges in the city.

U.S. Marines have twice opened fired when gunmen have either fired or aimed at the embassy. On April 30, the Marines killed at least three gunmen. Marines put the toll as high as nine.

Since then, gunmen tend to walk with their guns lowered near the embassy.

Mr. Taylor, a former civil servant, launched Liberia's civil war in 1989. The war has killed more than 150,000 people and put over half the country's population of 2.5 million to flight.

The latest fighting began on April 6 after the council sacked Krahn warlord Roosevelt Johnson as rural development minister and ordered his arrest on murder charges. Krahn factions rallied to Mr. Johnson when Mr. Taylor and Mr. Kromah's forces tried to arrest him. One truce held for 10 days in April.

Meanwhile the United Nations refugee organisation UNHCR said Tuesday it was urging four governments in

West Africa to open their doors to people fleeing civil strife in Liberia.

Spokesman Ron Redmond said the UNHCR had also made clear it was ready to bankroll any operation to shelter Liberian refugees, especially 3,000 packing a disease-ridden freighter now off Ghana in what he called a "voyage of the damned."

"We are talking to the governments of Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria to try to set up the reception and care of refugees from Liberia," Mr. Redmond told a news briefing.

"We are trying to make arrangements with NGOs (non-governmental organisations) in those countries to show we are capable of bringing those people in, and we've basically said we'll foot the bill."

he said the UNHCR was ready to provide food, water, shelter and medical care.

At the same time, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) told the briefing it was moving supplies to the ports of Takoradi and Tema in Ghana for the refugees, who include 700 women and 300 children.

Spokeswoman Margarita Amodeo said there were strong rumours from some of the people who had come off the freighter, the Nigerian-registered Bulk Challenge, that those left on board were being asked to pay for water, food and medicines.

On Monday, High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata offered help to countries giving asylum to people fleeing Liberia, and particularly for those on the Bulk Challenge and others on a fishing vessel off Sierra Leone.

"Unless the door is opened to them, a lot of people, many of them women and children," will die, she said.

The freighter has been at sea for a week, and has been turned away by the authorities in the Ivory Coast and initially also by the Ghanaian government when it reached Takoradi at the weekend.

But earlier Tuesday, Ghana called the ship back into the port — where some 250 refugees had been left on shore Monday. It did not say if it had decided to let all the people on the vessel stay.

U.S., S. Korea and Japan urge North Korea to agree to talks

CHEJU ISLAND, South Korea (R) — The United States, South Korea and Japan agreed Tuesday to press North Korea to accept peace talks and said they had no immediate food aid plan for the Communist state, South Korean officials said.

South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Chung Tae-ik said senior officials, gathered in the South Korean island of Cheju to coordinate strategy towards North Korea, reached a consensus "in all areas of concern."

Mr. Chung, speaking to reporters during a lunch break, did not elaborate but a South Korean official said envoys from Tokyo and Washington supported Seoul's argument that a serious food shortage faced by Pyongyang would not immediately lead to "African-style famine."

The question of emergency food aid emerged as a key issue after the United Nations warned Monday the food crisis in North Korea was likely to worsen in the near future.

"The food supply situation has deteriorated more seriously than had been anticipated," a joint report by the U.N.'s two Rome-based food agencies said.

A six-page "special alert" report by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said most of last year's harvest has been consumed.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department said Monday it was open to a new request for emergency food aid and was actively

considering a further easing of sanctions on Pyongyang.

But a South Korean delegate, who asked not to be identified, said: "The three nations agreed that, although North Korea had a serious food shortage, the situation is not likely to lead to disastrous famine seen in Africa."

He said the allies could not hammer out a scenario to cope with the potential threats posed by Pyongyang's economic hardships but agreed "a package to systematically deal with overall problems could be discussed in the four-nation talks."

Seoul officials have said four-nation peace talks proposed by U.S. President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam last month had the best chance of achieving stability on the Korean peninsula.

"We believe all measures, including economic assistance to North Korea, could be discussed in four-nation talks but we might be sending a wrong signal if we provide incentives in advance," one official said.

Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord, who heads the U.S. delegation, also stressed the need for the four-nation talks involving the two Koreas, the United States and China.

Japanese delegate Kenzo Oshima said Tokyo backed the four-nation talks but would have to seek independent steps to help Pyongyang to move into the international community.

Indian Communists quit power race

NEW DELHI (R) — Some of India's most hardened Communists wept publicly Tuesday after their party pulled out of its first bid to lead a federal government, leaving leftist partners confused and its own followers unconvinced.

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) withdrew veteran Marxist Jyoti Basu from the race for the prime minister's job after elections returned a hung parliament.

It said the CPI-M would not have enough say in policy because it was not the biggest party in the National Front-Left Front (NF-LF), a leftist alliance seeking to form a government.

"It's one of those things. It happens," said a tearful Sunet Chandra.

Mr. Basu, 81, was widely seen as the key to the NF-LF effort to keep the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP),

now the biggest party in parliament, out of power.

He was regarded as the only one who could manage its disparate elements and the CPI-M decision was seen as boosting the BJP's chances of a summons to power.

It also helped the chances of caretaker Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who led his Congress Party to its worst election defeat. If the NF-LF could not agree on another leader, it may have to turn to Mr. Rao to keep the BJP out.

CPI-M sources said Mr. Chandra was on the losing side of a vote by the 65-strong Central Committee where a bid by the leadership to try to make Mr. Basu prime minister was defeated by six votes.

"In our party, we believe in a collective decision, even if I may not agree with that decision," said committee member Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, covering his eyes.

Papandreou's return creates headaches for Simitis

ATHENS (AFP) — The return to political life of Greece's long-standing Socialist leader Andreas Papandreou has sparked a new crisis for his successor, Prime Minister Costas Simitis.

After four months of illness and seven weeks of convalescence, 77-year-old Papandreou indicated Monday he would not resign from the presidency of PASOK, Greece's ruling Socialist Party.

Mr. Simitis, too, installed as head of government four months ago when a sickly Papandreou appeared close to death, has not concealed his desire to also take control of the party.

By receiving PASOK Secretary-General Costas Skandalidis at his home in a suburb of Athens, Mr. Papandreou, known as the father of Greek socialism, signalled his concerns about the future of the party.

The economist-cum-politician who led Greece for the past 14 years may find that his age and the effects of his exhausting illness could prevent a return to a full and active political life.

However, photographs taken during his meeting with Mr. Skandalidis show a man rested and healthy, in contrast to the pictures of an old, gaunt Papandreou published on his departure from hospital in March.

The power struggle among the Socialists is gathering pace ahead of the next party conference expected at the end of June.

Moscow sees talks with Chechen rebels this month

MOSCOW (R) — The Russian government expects to start discussions with Chechen separatist leaders before the end of this month, a minister told Interfax News Agency Tuesday.

Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov, a member of the State Commission on Chechnya, also confirmed that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin had asked the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to help organise contacts.

Sporadic clashes continued in the Caucasus region overnight and troops hunted for guerrillas in the capital, Grozny, amid reports that rebels were planning to attack President Boris Yeltsin during a planned visit to western Chechnya Tuesday, Interfax said. There were also clashes around the mountain town of Vedeno.

Shrugging off warnings for his safety, Mr. Yeltsin has said he plans to go to Grozny to get negotiations going.

The trip could risk ending up as little more than a campaign stunt for Mr. Yeltsin, whose 17-month battle against the separatists has lost him the support

of many Russian liberals.

A Chechen local government official told Interfax Mr. Yeltsin's visit would include an introduction to Chechen customs and the presentation of awards to workers and cultural figures.

There are other signs that Moscow is stepping up behind-the-scenes efforts to renew contacts with the rebels, broken off after a brief ceasefire last summer.

Russian troops killed guerrilla leader Dzhokhar Dudayev last month in a rocket strike. He has been replaced by a similarly hardline advocate of outright secession, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

But other commanders are said to be more ready to talk.

Mr. Mikhailov said: "Certain members of the State Commission have already contacted the 'Dudayevists'."

Interfax said that, for now, it was only a question of "consultations" which could later turn into "negotiations".

These could be renewed at the level seen last autumn.

Mr. Mikhailov said he was willing to head a Russian delegation and meet Khosbakhmed Yarikhanov, who led the separatist side at previous contacts in Grozny.

Doku Zavgayev, head of the Moscow-backed local government in Chechnya, would also have to take part, he said.

"Such three-way negotiations may become an important stage in fulfilling Boris Yeltsin's programme for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Chechnya," the minister said.

An official at the Swiss embassy in Moscow confirmed that Tim Guldinmann, the Swiss diplomat who heads the OSCE mission in Grozny, had returned there Monday after meeting Mr. Chernomyrdin.

He could give details of the talks. Interfax said Monday Mr. Guldinmann had been asked to make contact with the rebels.

Mr. Mikhailov said the OSCE, which attended the earlier talks, could take part and not simply act as intermediary in negotiations.

Russian presidential hopefuls hit the air waves

MOSCOW (R) — Candidates in the Russian presidential election hit the air waves Tuesday on the first day of official campaign broadcasting.

Law-and-order ex-army General Alexander Lebed started the first early morning broadcast by promising to clamp down on social injustice and boost the economy.

"For five years we have been running on the spot. It is time to take the first steps forward. Give me the strength of your support," GEN. Lebed growled on Radio Mayak.

He was followed an hour later by Communist Gennady Zyuganov, a front-runner with President Boris Yeltsin for the June 16 election. He sought to allay fears over what a Communist victory would mean.

"There should be no fears of prisons or 'gulags' (state labour camps) or other illegalities reemerging. Everything will be based...on the courts' decisions," MR. Zyuganov told Radio Ynost.

Over the next four weeks until the end of June 14, the 11 candidates will take slots of up to half-an-hour of free air time on four radio stations and three television channels to try to win Russia's more than 100 million voters.

Candidates will also be able to buy a restricted amount of air time on state channels and commercial TV and radio stations.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, was scheduled to make his first radio broadcast next Friday morning and take a 10-minute slot on the ORT first television channel on May 21.

Mr. Zyuganov, 51, who has led Mr. Yeltsin in most opinion polls for most of the pre-election race but seen his lead gradually narrowed, was due to broadcast on Russia's second television channel Wednesday evening.

Other main contenders include ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who in the past has run strong advertising campaigns, liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky, eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fyodorov and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Gen. Lebed, a retired general whose broadcast was interspersed with stirring orchestral music, targeted what he described as the 60 per cent of voters who were neither pro-Yeltsin nor pro-Zyuganov but "simple, ordinary people...who want to live on their own land and run their own household."

Railroading against what he said was the aloof indifference of Russia's present-day leadership, he said: "I will destroy the wall of social indifference and powerlessness."

Taking up a law-and-order theme which he played strongly in last December's parliamentary election, in which he won a seat, Gen. Lebed pledged to crack down on crooked bureaucrats who he said had turned Russia into "a pig-sty".

Mr. Zyuganov for his part pledged to exploit the "billions of assets" which he said Russia had abroad and to recoup huge outstanding debts to find more money to pump into the economy.

Everglades search turns up plane recorder

MIAMI (R) — U.S. safety experts Tuesday began analysing data from a muddy, battered flight recorder fished from the Florida swamp where a ValuJet DC-9 crashed Saturday, killing all 109 aboard.

Divers prepared to wade back into the soupy Everglades swamp waters after dawn to grope for more human remains and airplane fragments.

Pontoon boats or floats were to be set up to provide crews with supplies for the painstaking search. The quicksand-like conditions of the Everglades have made the site one of the most difficult ever faced by aviation investigators.

The flight data recorder is expected to provide crucial information about the final minutes of the airplane's flight from Miami to Atlanta, including the ageing DC-9's speed, altitude and nine other key systems, according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Aviation officials were scrutinising ValuJet's maintenance and operations following questions about the low-priced carrier's rapid growth since 1993 using older jets.

The jet that crashed had been forced to return to the airport gate on a half-dozen occasions during the past two years, and it had to summon a mechanic for last-minute repairs to circuit-breakers in the fuel pumps earlier in the day of its final flight.

"The problem was resolved," said Robert Francis, vice chairman of the NTSB.

It was luck, not the U.S. Navy's loan of high-tech sonar equipment, that unearthed the flight data recorder Monday. The 30-pound (13 kg) orange box containing the so-called "black box" was submerged under about four feet (1.2 metres) of water and was bent in the middle, Mr. Francis said. A Miami police diver searching for human remains found it when he stumbled across the box with his foot Monday afternoon.

"According to those who have seen a lot of these, it was in remarkably good shape," Mr. Francis told reporters.

The box contains a metal cylinder which holds a magnetic tape to record mechanical operations. Recorders aboard newer airplanes are more sophisticated, and monitor 70 or

more aircraft functions, investigators said.

The muddy, damp recorder was placed inside an ice chest, packed with cool water to avoid drying out the taped data too quickly and flown to the NTSB Laboratory in Washington late Monday evening. Experts immediately began analysing the data.

On Tuesday, divers planned to resume their search in hopes of finding the cockpit voice recorder as well as more remains of the victims. The Miami Medical Examiner's Office said the largest body part yet recovered was a knee, and that there was little chance that any intact bodies would be found.

The divers were equipped with special rubber suits to protect against the fuel-soaked waters, and a police sniper stood guard with an automatic weapon and a pistol in case alligators threatened the divers.

Preliminary information about the DC-9's two engines, which remained submerged in the Everglades, indicate that they did not fail during the short flight, officials said. And there was no sign of an explosion or fire, based on the wreckage found so far, they said.

Some private aviation experts have theorised the crew may have been overcome by toxic fumes or smoke from an electrical fire, based on the pilot's last words to the air traffic controllers. Witnesses said the plane slammed nose-first into the waters of the Everglades as it was attempting to return to Miami International Airport, about 24 kilometres away.

ValuJet founder and President Lewis Jordan said only about 100 customers called to cancel reservations Monday because of safety fears. The Atlanta-based airline typically receives about 20,000 reservation phone calls each day, he told CNN.

ValuJet is now "double-double and triple checking" each aircraft prior to take-off, Mr. Jordan said.

ABC TV said the security checks held up one ValuJet flight in Hartford, Connecticut, Monday for equipment problems.



Rescue workers wearing protective clothing comb for debris near an airboat at the scene of the ValuJet Flight 592 crash. Rescue workers said Monday they did not expect to recover any bodies of the 109 people who died when the plane smashed into the Everglades on May 11 (Reuters photo)

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Time to act

THE FACT that the meeting of the International Committee on the Enhancement of the Lives of Rural Women which started its deliberations in Amman yesterday has drawn so many first ladies and participants reflects worldwide interest in the cause of women's rights. Since women, even in the most developed countries, have some distance to cover before they can attain their objectives, especially equality between the sexes and equal opportunities, one can imagine the desperate lot of women in rural areas in the developing world. As Her Majesty Queen Noor pointed out in her speech to the conference, these lack their most basic rights as human beings. Further, the near enslavement of young and older women in villages of some developing countries has been repeatedly documented, where some of them are even sold and bought as chattel. What is even worse, many young women in remote districts of poor states are exploited sexually in the most savage way. This has prompted human rights experts to characterise such sub-human treatment as contemporary slavery in every sense of the word.

No doubt the high-level participation in the Amman gathering would want to address not only the need to change laws but also attitudes towards women. In other words, the world needs a new culture on women, particularly in the rural areas of developing countries. Given the pioneering steps undertaken by Jordan both on the official and the non-governmental levels, to improve the position of girls and women, holding this conference in Amman comes as a form of international recognition of where Jordan stands when it comes to moves towards equality between the two sexes. We hope that the conferees will succeed in drawing global attention to what needs to be done and begin the long path towards making women true and equal partners in development and progress.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

PERHAPS THE most important decision of the tripartite summit held in Cairo between the leaders of Palestine, Egypt and Jordan is that which called for convening periodic meetings between them starting the first week of June, said Mahmoud Rimawi a writer for Al Ra'i Tuesday. This decision clearly reflects the three leaders' realisation of the importance of maintaining consultations for the sake of giving momentum to the peace process and helping the Palestinians regain their legitimate rights, said the writer. He said that concerted efforts in this respect are of paramount importance to help the Palestinians attain their national aspirations on the one hand and to strengthen the Arab side's negotiating position with regard to the rest of the occupied Arab lands on the other. One should emphasise that Egypt, Jordan and Palestine together form an integrated regional political, geographic bloc that can help regain the Palestinian rights and restore the usurped lands if the concerned parties adequately coordinate their moves at all levels and maintain their contacts with the influential nations, added the writer. He said that it is important for the three countries to involve Europe in the peace process and so help attain a balance with the United States and its ally and it is also important for them to pave the ground for an Arab summit meeting involving all Arab countries in muster support for their endeavours.

ALSO DWELLING on the tripartite summit, Taker Al Adwan, a writer for Al Dustour Arabic daily, said it was a good beginning to hold the summit before the start of the final-status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority. "Any tendency to coordinate stands before the start of negotiations is a good indication and we hope that this tendency will be enhanced by the time the negotiations start," the writer said. He said the agenda of the negotiations is important not only for Palestinians, but also for the Jordanians and the Egyptians, as is for the Syrians and the Lebanese, he said. He added that this fact can be used as a pressure card by the Palestinian negotiators if well used and if supported by all Arab parties. Jordan, the writer continued, is concerned about the shape of borders the Palestinians and Israelis will agree upon because of the long borders between Jordan and Palestine. We are also concerned about finding a solution to the problem of refugees and the displaced because the bulk of them are Jordanians, he said, adding that Jordan is also concerned about giving the Palestinians the right to self-determination because any solution that does not meet this target will not end fears of the Likud Party's designs.

Washington Watch

Clinton vs. Dole six months, until November

By Dr. James Zogby

IT IS six months until November and President Bill Clinton's lead over his Republican challenger Bob Dole is growing and the Republican Party is locked in an intra-party war. But Democrats know that it is a long time until election day and they are not yet ready to celebrate.

A recent study of all the major national shows that Mr. Clinton's lead over Mr. Dole has been expanding since January. Some polls give the president a 30 per cent lead, with the average margin in excess of 20 per cent. Mr. Clinton's approval ratings are also now at a three-year high, with 56 per cent of all voters now viewing the president positively.

What is especially heartening for the Democrats is the fact that their strategy appears to be working. Instead of actually campaigning against Mr. Dole, Mr. Clinton, who has not even formally announced his reelection campaign, is simply being President Clinton and not candidate Clinton.

This White House strategy, modelled to some extent after Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign, has been to personally stay above the fray until the fall, and allow the party to carry the bulk of the campaign until then. For its part, the Democratic Party has targeted massive advertising campaigns in key states where they have determined that it is important to build the president's positive image. Not convinced that their lead will hold until November, the Democratic approach is designed to firm up the president's positives before the campaign actually takes off in the fall.

At the same time, it has fallen to Democratic spokespeople and White House staff to respond to each and every Republican attack on the president. This "rapid response" approach has so far worked and has enabled the president to appear to be above the political fray.

As a result of this Democratic strategy, not only is the president's lead growing, but he is building support in every region of the country. The Clinton margin over Mr. Dole is substantially larger than the May 1994 lead that then President Reagan had over his Democratic challenger

Walter Mondale. Mr. Reagan's margin was 12 per cent — Mr. Clinton's '96 lead is nearly double that.

But Democrats have not yet declared victory. They remember that in May of 1992 then President Bush had a 16 per cent lead over challenger Clinton and in May of 1980 then President Carter had a 7 per cent lead over challenger Ronald Reagan. Disaster can strike and seemingly invincible campaigns can fall apart.

What is contributing to the president's advantage at this point is the fact that while their strategy appears to be working, the Republican's efforts have been hampered by internal fighting that is hurting their candidate.

After a bitter year-long campaign, Mr. Dole finally emerged in April as the successful Republican nominee. Almost immediately Mr. Dole was hit by public criticism from leaders in his own party. Dissatisfied by their candidate's performance, a number of Republican elected officials attacked Mr. Dole for his "lack of vision," what they termed his "failure to provide leadership," and his "weak performance" as Senate leader.

Some respected Republican intellectuals went so far as to call on their fellow party members to begin planning for a "post-November loss strategy." These public expressions of pessimism were reminiscent of fellow Democrats distancing themselves from what they assumed to be a losing Mondale campaign in 1984.

Stung by public calls for him to leave his Senate leadership post and begin a more aggressive presidential campaign, Mr. Dole's aides began to plan a series of major addresses in early May that would establish their candidate's vision and themes and silence his critics. But this strategy encountered unexpected difficulties.

As Mr. Dole embarked on his mission, some Republicans unaccountably distracted attention from his efforts by beginning a public intra-party war.

The first shot was surprisingly fired by Mr. Dole's National Campaign chairperson, New York Senator Al D'Amato. As Mr. Dole was preparing to

deliver the first of his major theme-setting speeches, Mr. D'Amato stole the headlines of the day by delivering a verbal assault against conservative leader Pat Buchanan. Calling Mr. Buchanan a "philosophical ayatollah," Mr. D'Amato's attack only served to distract attention from Mr. Dole and to provoke Mr. Buchanan to threaten to leave the party unless the attacks stopped. Mr. Buchanan's challenge is clear. If he and his far-right supporters are not given a welcome at the Republican convention, they might decide to start a third party.

Inexplicably, Mr. D'Amato continued his war the next day, choosing for his next target the Republican speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

At this point it became clear that the Dole campaign was working at cross purposes with itself. It is no secret that Senator Dole has needed to cut both Gingrich and Buchanan down to size and that the assigned "hatchet man" was his campaign chairman. But the timing and ferociousness of the attacks were puzzling. They distracted attention away from Mr. Dole's long-awaited message speeches and provoked bitter retaliation.

Mr. Gingrich and his conservative allies responded with a public attack on Mr. D'Amato. In an effort to silence this intra-party feuding, the national chair of the Republican Party also criticised Mr. D'Amato for the attacks. But all this did was create yet another day of press stories about Republican in-fighting.

If all of this were not enough to unsettle Mr. Dole, the volatile issue of abortion once again emerged to expose deep Republican divisions.

In the past few weeks five Republican governors, all Dole supporters, have called on their party to drop anti-abortion language from the 1996 Republican Party platform.

Calling for more tolerance within the party for a diversity of opinion on abortion, their public challenge brought a sharp rebuke from the pro-life, anti-abortion movement.

Both Pat Buchanan and his allies in the Christian right-wing have stated that

if the Republican Party attempted to drop its opposition to abortion they would wage a bitter fight at the party convention in August, and if they lost, would leave the party.

All of these antics have left the Dole campaign in shambles. First attacks on Mr. Dole's "visionless, non-charismatic style," then an intra-party feud, and finally a brewing war between the irreconcilable pro- and anti-abortion wings of the party. The campaign has been sidetracked and is having trouble gaining control.

It will be recalled that it was precisely the inability to gain control of its message and to rein in disparate voices within the party that so severely wounded Mr. Clinton and the Democrats in 1993 and 1994.

Mr. Dole's campaign will have to work hard to get their campaign and candidate back in focus. Their strategy in the coming months will be directed at a number of goals. First, they will be working to silence the intra-party conflict. This may not be easy, but is essential if they are to move forward to November. Since the divisions within the party are real, it may be a good thing that they have emerged early in the campaign. If issue conflicts and personal rivalries can be resolved before August, Mr. Dole's chances may improve. In any case, many Republican analysts are saying that since these conflicts were inevitable, it is better to deal with them now than to wait until the fall.

Second, the Dole campaign will attempt to gain control over how they project their image to the press and the public. It is essential for Mr. Dole to define a clear vision of what his leadership will bring to Americans. He must also clearly define the differences between his vision and that of President Clinton.

Thus far this effort has been frustrated by a number of factors. Intra-party feuding has been a distraction. Another factor has been that during the costly primary season, the Dole campaign spent nearly all of the funds it is allowed to spend according to federal election law. Since President Clinton had no primary challenger, he saved his

campaign funds and now can out-spend Mr. Dole between May and August. Campaign finance reports show that the Clinton campaign has almost \$20 million left to spend on advertising before the August conventions, while the Dole campaign has less than \$1 million remaining.

One additional factor that has hurt the ability of the Dole campaign to define itself has been Mr. Clinton's ability to "steal" many Republican issues. By accepting a balanced budget, welfare reform, and by focusing on foreign policy leadership, Mr. Clinton has so far muted the Republican challenges in these areas.

Finally, the Dole campaign will seek to use the question of personal integrity and character to their advantage. Bob Dole's personal story of bravery in war and his commitment to public service are viewed by many as his strongest assets. Mr. Dole has not yet been able to establish this theme, but he clearly hopes to use it in the fall.

What has been interesting so far has been the extent to which voters seem to have ignored this issue of "character." President Clinton's personal flaws have become cliché. Books have been written, jokes have been told, and the attacks against the president have been relentless. And yet Mr. Clinton has not only survived, but his personal ratings among voters have substantially improved.

With six months to go, it appears that Democrats have a decided advantage. They have a focused candidate, a unified party, and a strategy that appears to be working. Republicans, meanwhile, are suffering from a candidate who can't get on track, a feuding party, and a strategy that is being foiled at every step.

If the election were today, Mr. Clinton would win. But it is still too early to predict a November outcome, too many uncertainties remain: the possibility of third and fourth party candidates, the stability of the economy, and the potential for a crisis in a volatile world. Any of these could have a dramatic impact on the election campaigns.

When citizens let the system go commercial

By Richard Harwood

WASHINGTON — Commercialisation of politics may not be one of the more ennobling developments in American history, but it meets a need caused by the decline of civic virtue.

The system is based on a theory of self-government and citizen participation in public affairs. When citizens decline to participate, the theory breaks down and political parties wither.

To fill the vacuum and keep things going, a profit-making industry has arisen. It mobilises voters, raises much of the financing for political organisations and campaigns, trains and markets candidates, devises election strategies, defines issues and shapes public opinion through the mass media.

We don't know the industry's dimensions. Peter Levine at the University of Maryland estimates that in a presidential election year at least 35,000 professional consultants are doing the main work of political campaigns. But that is surely an undercount. It does not include tens of thousands of paid, low-level employees working phone banks and comput-

ers, conducting political polls and voter canvasses, obtaining signatures for referendums.

From the work of scholars such as Herbert Alexander we have a rough idea of gross revenues. Mr. Alexander reports that \$3.2 billion was spent on elections at all levels in 1992; that figure is likely to exceed \$4 billion this year.

Where does the money come from, and where does it go? The best analysis of outlays has been made by Larry Makinson and Joshua Goldstein in a book published by Congressional Quarterly. They focused on the \$542 million spent on congressional elections in 1992. More than half the money went to political consultants, those "highly skilled advisers who develop campaign strategy, mold and project the candidate's image, make certain people show up to vote on Election Day and find the money to pay for it all."

They were media consultants — "kingmakers" — who "fashioned and projected the images that spelled the difference between winning and losing in many competitive races. They were pollsters, "get-out-the-vote"

experts, "persuasion mail" specialists, professional fund-raisers, "event consultants," direct mail consultants, "campaign management" consultants, lawyers and accountants.

Why should a democracy have to rely on political Hessians and hired guns to do the work that citizens presumably would do if the system worked as those who invented it — the Founding Fathers — envisioned?

An obvious answer is that the last days of the 20th century bear little resemblance to the world of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. America has become a nation extending from sea to shining sea, populated by 260 million diverse people preoccupied with personal affairs, whose lives are dominated by huge public and private institutions that seem increasingly remote from their influence or control. They see no point to political involvement.

Fewer than 5 per cent of adult Americans engage in any kind of political activity, voting aside, and even the numbers who vote are unimpressive. About 4 per cent of us contributed money to parties or candidates in 1992.

Congress in 1972 allowed people to designate on their tax returns a \$1 contribution (\$3 since 1993) to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. The number of tax filers designating these contributions peaked at 28.7 per cent in 1981, and for the 1992 fund had declined by 17 per cent. The amount contributed — \$29 million — was trivial when set against the 1992 campaign's cost of well over \$500 million.

The rest of it came from a small segment of the population. Professional fund-raisers, using name lists compiled by commercial firms, produced a lot of it and were paid very large fees for their services. Name lists are rented from companies such as Rent America, a Texas outfit that has 220 million names in its computers and virtually all of the relevant demographic data that money raisers require.

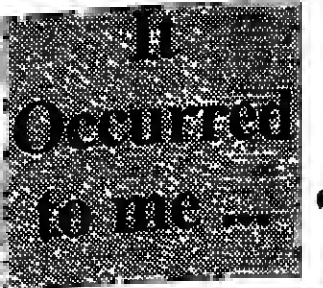
Many of these firms sell lists of Democrats, Republicans, frequent voters, non voters, homeowners, renters, families with and without children, and other information useful to money raisers. Political action committees are a source of huge sums. Their contributions are investments

in public policy outcomes, including the buying and selling of policy-makers from Congress to the White House.

The commercialisation of the political process extends, in certain ways, to the press. The dissolution of the political parties has increased the stature and presumed influence of the media in political affairs and has created conditions of interdependence among journalists and the professional political class. Like those professionals, many journalists have grown very wealthy, not only from primary employments but from the sale of political expertise and exploitation of "insider" status to audiences at home and abroad.

This picture of a democracy gone sour in important ways is no doubt dispiriting to some. Reformists seek a solution in a revival of civil virtue among citizens who at present exhibit little interest. That is proof enough that people get the kind of politics and the kind of government they deserve.

The Washington Post



A cross-stitch in time

By Ali Kassay

Now and again it is most refreshing to come across a job that is thoroughly well done. Naturally, this is not a frequent occurrence, which is why one appreciates the occasion all the more. I refer here to the fine work being done with the humble cross stitch.

Since the first hour of history or thereabouts, women in this part of the world, like their sisters elsewhere, succumbed to the attraction of the aesthetic, and competed with each other in creating beautiful objects. However, finding themselves in a region that has never been richly endowed with natural resources, they were deprived of the basic raw materials such as exotic fabrics, precious metals and stones, and aromatic woods, which, in other parts of the world came to reflect wealth. Here, there was too little wealth to be acquired and accumulated. Women had to make do with what little they could find, and in this stark environment, the operative word was functionality.

Yet, such was the passion for beauty among the daughters of Eve that they wasted no time in compensating for the shortcomings of nature's endowment. Their answer was the cross-stitch, which they used to adorn every conceivable object that could be penetrated by a needle pulling thread. Gowns, cushions, quilts, covers, and every other imaginable accessory was embellished with colourful floral and arabesque designs. But the cross stitch fell into disuse since the beginning of the century, when the order of the day became the quest for the modern, and disregard for the old and conventional.

This unfortunate trend was reversed in the eighties by the National Project on Crafts of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. Under the leadership of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein, and in cooperation with Save the Children Fund, the project revived the cross-stitch, among other forms of traditional crafts, not only as an expression of Jordan's national patrimony, but also as a source of income for underprivileged women.

One of the offshoots of this cooperation was the Jordan River Design, established in 1987. It functioned principally as an outlet for the crafts hand-made by the beneficiary women. Now an independent non-profit making organisation, under the dynamic and resourceful direction of Her Royal Highness Princess Rania Al Abdullah, Jordan River Design has taken the Jordanian crafts industry into a new and innovative field.

Jordanian professional designers were commissioned to design modern functional objects, using traditional fabrics, colours and stitches, which were then executed by the women. The result, displayed at the Jordan River Design's exhibition entitled "New Beginnings," was an impressive, varied and beautiful array of products, ranging from the traditional quilts, bed linen, and table cloths, to include baby accessories, frames, wall hangings, purses, paravans, and even beach bags.

The beauty of it is that the Jordan River Design, while introducing this qualitative leap, has not lost sight of its initial mission, which is social welfare. Thanks to this imaginative production and marketing policy, income from crafts accounts for about 30 per cent of the beneficiaries' total income. A fine piece of work.

China calls on U.S. to 'respect' Arabs in Mideast peace process

CAIRO (AFP) — China underlined its support for the Middle East peace process, calling on the United States to "respect" Arab viewpoints during a visit to Egypt on Tuesday by its President Jiang Zemin.

Mr. Jiang met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for talks on the situation in the Middle East, then witnessed the signing of a series of cooperation accords between the two countries.

"China supports the peace process. It believes any resolution must take into account all sides' interests in a peaceful, balanced process," Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told journalists.

"The United States must take into consideration the Arab nation. If the U.S. wants to play a role in the Middle East it should give great respect to the Arabs' viewpoints," Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Gou Fang said.

But Mr. Shen added that Mr. Jiang and Mr. Mubarak did not discuss specifics about the peace process, only "the overall situation in the Middle East."

Mr. Jiang also met with Mr. Mubarak after arriving in Cairo on Monday to kick off his four-day visit to Egypt, the third leg of an African tour.

During their talks, the two

leaders stressed that "no nation may interfere in the matters of other countries and all nations great and small, rich and poor, must participate in managing the world's affairs," Mr. Shen said.

The presidents on Tuesday witnessed the signing by ministers of three accords for "technological, labour and cultural cooperation," he said.

The technological accord includes a provision giving Egypt a grant of \$4 million, Mr. Shen said.

There are also plans to create a centre for marketing Chinese goods in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, similar to one already working in the Suez canal free zone of Port Said, he said.

Mr. Ziang and Mr. Mubarak both "expressed their desire to develop economic ties between the two countries," whose bilateral trade totalled \$450 million in 1995, he said.

Despite a 1994 accord to encourage investment, there is no Chinese investment in Egypt, according to Egypt's International Cooperation Ministry.

Mr. Jiang was to meet later with Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri "to explore in detail Sino-Egyptian relations especially in economic reform and Egypt's plan in that field," Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

After the presidents met, the two foreign ministers held talks in which Mr. Qian said Mr. Musa informed him "of the latest developments in the peace process."

Mr. Musa underlined the importance of "China's independent position concerning the new world order in a number of issues on the world stage."

He commented that "coordination between Egypt and China on the U.N. Security Council continues to be stable."

Egypt will take over the presidency of the Security Council in June, the government daily Al-Ahram reported Tuesday.

Arah League head Esmat Abdul Meguid was also to meet Mr. Jiang on Tuesday to seek an increasing Chinese "support of the Arabs in the Security Council," where Beijing is a permanent member.

Mr. Jiang was also to meet the Parliament Speaker Fathy Sour, tour the Giza Pyramids and other sites, before visiting factories outside Cairo.

The Chinese president will then make a tour of south Egypt, including the historic town of Luxor.

He began his Africa tour in Kenya and Ethiopia and after Egypt will head for Mali, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

For Khartoum's squatters, life is a battle for shelter

By G. B. Labelle
The Associated Press

KHARTOUM — Piles of broken mud bricks spread far across the vast field. They are the remains of tiny huts built by refugees who couldn't bring themselves to believe the government's threat to raze the place.

Authorities regularly tore down squatters' shacks by the hundreds, maybe even by the thousands, covering several square kilometres across the River Nile from Khartoum, Sudan's capital. And it was home to 50,000 people.

"Most of the people said they can't do this. This place is very big," said Dima Shukra, who fled the Nuba Mountains when her homeland was devastated by Sudan's civil war.

The bulldozers came anyway, plowing all in their path. The government wanted the squatters out as part of its campaign to open up the land around Khartoum for farms, roads or authorised housing projects.

But the squatters aren't budging. They have put together huts of sticks, cardboard, cloth. They are picking still-whole bricks out of the

rubble, piling them up. And they are making new "to hell with the commissioner bricks" of mud and straw, named in disdain for the government.

They are determined to rebuild their homes. They have nowhere else to go. Struggles over housing date back to the early 1980s, when famine in western Sudan began driving people from their homes, and picked up when the war with southern rebels increased the flow. Now, an estimated 1.9 million of Khartoum's 5 million residents live in refugee camps or squatter areas.

Officially, the destruction of houses at Khartoum and other camps is part of a plan to relocate displaced people to more suitable areas where water, electricity and health care are available. But U.N. officials, aid workers and the squatters themselves accuse the government of doing half the job — tearing down the houses without arranging anywhere for most of the displaced to live.

Christoph T. Jaeger, the U.N. resident coordinator in Sudan, says there is no organisation among the various government ministries coordinating the needs of

the displaced.

"The mandate of one is to make sure people are not on privately owned land, but it's not in charge of where they should go," he said in an interview.

He said the minister of housing for Khartoum state "is a minister of urbanisation... the displaced are in his way."

The minister, Sharaf-Eddine Bannaga, contends he is trying to help people find homes. He has laid out rules on which squatters are entitled to houses in displaced person camps and even outlined measures such as "popular committees" to allow them a role in decisions about their lives.

"People should choose where they live," says Mr. Bannaga's list of policies. But, it adds, "their choice should, however, respect the needs and rights of others and should not harm the public interest."

Under his guidelines, many who lost their homes in the latest demolitions in December would appear to qualify for homes: they are Sudanese, they have families and they have been in Khartoum since before 1990.

But the squatters say that the popular committees are manipulated by the govern-

ment and that most residents do not meet Mr. Bannaga's criteria for earning their living. The U.N. emergency unit in Sudan estimates 400,000 of the displaced people in Khartoum require some form of assistance.

Amin Abras, 37, has never found a permanent job and tells of walking each day to a market in hopes of finding temporary work in construction or loading trucks.

"Today I have nothing," he said.

Mr. Abras was a dairy farmer in the Nuha mountains. Now he lives with the 23 member of his family in three adjacent shacks, each little bigger than a modern bathroom.

The family includes his wife, children and two sisters and their children. The sister's husbands were taken by rebels before the family left the mountains and no one knows what happened to them.

Mr. Abras wants to go back to the mountains but the area is still torn by war. "Even if I'm given land here, I can't keep cows," he said.

Some aid workers believe the treatment of the displaced is punishment because they are of a differ-

ent ethnic and religious background. Most are black Africans, some are Christians or Animists, while the government is dominated by Arab Muslims.

But one aid worker — who would not give her name, saying she displaced as Muslims, too.

She contends the government is punishing the squatters as southerners — the kin and potential allies of those waging the civil war. The government denies this.

Whatever the reason for their troubles, the squatters remain. Most of the children do not go to school. Many are malnourished and sick. Families survive on money that men earn from part-time jobs and that women get from selling tea in the market.

Shana Mnsa Ibrahim, a woman who judges she is in her 40s, says she wants to go back to planting and reaping in the south but has no money to return, even if it were safe. After the last demolition of her house, her husband took ill and died. She and her three children now live with a sister.

How long will she remain in Khartoum? She smiled sadly at the question.

"Maybe a year. Maybe two. Maybe forever."

First ladies open meeting in Amman

(Continued from page 1)

state or group of states," he said.

The 1996 ISC meeting focuses on the enhancement of the quality of life of rural women and their families, food security and micro-credit for women.

"Feminisation of poverty means, in practical terms, that in most parts of the South, the problems of poverty correspond to the unmet needs of women," Queen Noor told the gathering.

Speaking in her capacity as president of the ISC, Queen Noor pointed at the persisting "unacceptable disparities by gender," such as female illiteracy, and highlighted the importance of focusing on improving the status of rural women because "to a very large extent, rural women are the world's poor."

The ISC conference is also meant to review progress in the advancement of rural women around the world with particular reference to the Fourth U.N. World Conference on Women held in Beijing last year.

It will adopt a plan of action for the next two years "that can effectively build upon the Beijing recommendations, through the active commitment of first ladies to the welfare of rural women," Queen Noor said.

Queen Fabiola of Belgium, patron of ISC, Queen Sofia of Spain, first ladies Ana Paula Dos Santos of Angola, Elizabeth de Calderon-Sol of Salvador, Dato Seri Datin Paduka of Malaysia, Maryam Sami Abacha of Nigeria, Beatriz Breuer of Paraguay, Elisabeth Diouf of Senegal and Emilia Kovacova of the Slovak Republic — all members of the ISC — are attending the conference.

Other countries are represented by special envoys of their first ladies.

Also attending as special guests are first ladies Maria Ivanova Zheleva of Bulgaria and Jocelyne Lissouha of Congo, U.N. Under-Secretary General and special envoy of the secretary general on women and development Gertrude Mongella, and President of the International Union of Family Organisation Maria Teresa de Costa Macedo.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti also attended the opening session of the conference.

Calling for the enlargement of the role played by voluntary and semi-governmental associations in improving living standards of rural women, the King warned that "improvement of living standards is something that cannot be discharged solely by the public sector."

In this regard, he commended the work done by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and the Queen Alia Fund, "whose development models are now emulated in the region," especially for their endeavours in strengthening the philosophy of integrated development.

Queen Noor underlined the link between poverty and political marginalisation. "Less than 10 per cent of the world's people participate directly in the political, economic, social and cultural institutions that shape their lives, and most marginalised of all are rural women," she pointed out.

Queen Noor also referred to the "widespread socio-economic transformation" which the Middle East and North Africa are undergoing as a result of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Queen Noor added that the 1994 and 1995 Casablanca and Amman economic summits, which were made possible by the peace process, provided "opportunities for us in the region to more effectively position women's issues and priorities... on the regional economic agenda."

Both Queen Noor and Queen Fabiola, whose King Baudouin Foundation hosted the first ISC meeting in Brussels in 1994, called for the ISC to reinforce its presence and role in the forthcoming development conferences and summits.

The ISC, founded in 1992 by the Geneva Summit for the Economic Advancement of Rural Women to serve as an advocacy group comprising wives of heads of states and governments, was recognised by the World Conference on Women in Beijing as an inter-governmental organisation and, as such, was admitted to attend the meeting in the Chinese capital as an observer.

As ISC spokesperson at the Beijing conference, Queen Fabiola gave an account of ISC participation and said that "despite the undeniable successes, the situation of the rural women is still far from improving in the way we would wish."

During the opening ceremony, two women from the Jordan Valley, Najwa Sha'sha and Mathyel Gadi, shared with the audience their working and life experiences.

They recalled the days when they started running their families' agriculture

business. They talked of men who refused to work with them in the farm, a prominent neighbour who prohibited them to talk to his daughters — "not to ruin their minds" — and government officials who did not take women seriously.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties they listed, they also are the living proof that "success is possible," as Ms. Sha'sha said.

"More than anything I humbly consider that my real achievement in my life so far has been to set an example to women in the Jordan Valley, who have seen my patience and my commitment to stay where others have left," she said.

The first of the three working sessions of the conference, before the closing remarks scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, was held later in the afternoon and chaired by Queen Noor.

A part from Queen Fabiola's remarks on the ISC participation in the Beijing conference, the working session included a presentation on the Beijing conference by Secretary General of the conference Gertrude Mongella, a statement by International Fund for Agricultural Development President Fawzi Sultan, and a summary of NHF projects and accomplishments by NHF expert Sima Bahous.

During the afternoon, participants visited the NHF's Wadi Seer community development project at Iraq Al Amir, which was initiated in 1994 to invigorate comprehensive socio-economic progress in the five villages of the area and to generate long-term employment for poor women.

The comprehensive development approach, on which the Wadi Seer project is based and which includes professional training and education on family and civil affairs as well as environment awareness and the restoration of the village, helped create "a more enlightened, active and valued rural woman," Queen Noor said before the trip to Iraq Al Amir.

delegation in Jordan, and Urs Boegli, director of the ICRC's communication department in Geneva would present working papers to the seminar on Wednesday.

Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories are represented at the seminar by three representatives each, and representatives of the international press present in Jordan were also present.

Columnist and former diplomat Walid Saadi moderated discussions on Tuesday and the panelists included Mr. Boegli, Hazem Hashem, an Egyptian writer and journalist, Al Dostour Chief Editor Nabil Sharif, Gassan Habbal from Lebanon's Al Mustaqbal Television, Nabil Al Khatib, a professor from the Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, and Mahmoud Zawawi, regional representative of Voice of America.

Portugal prepares to celebrate its navigator hero

By Richard Waddington
Reuters

LISBON — When Spain marked the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage to the Americas, Seville — site of the celebratory 1992 expo exhibition — was left with a big urban headache.

Portugal, which is preparing to salute Vasco da Gama, its own hero of the seas, with a similar international show in 1998, believes it has learned an important lesson from its neighbour's extravaganza.

Expo '98, likely to be one of the last big international exhibitions of the 20th century, commemorates the 500 years since the Portuguese navigator discovered the sea route to India in 1498 and opened up a new world of lucrative trade for Europe.

The Portuguese like to remind the Spanish that while Columbus's feat may

be internationally more renowned, the Italian-born explorer was really looking for the route that da Gama eventually found.

The Lisbon exhibition, which is taking as its theme the oceans of the world, is every bit as ambitious in terms of size and spectacle as that in southern Spain.

But organisers intend the end result of Expo '98, which is being built beside the banks of the River Tagus on the rundown eastern edge of Lisbon, to be very different.

Four years on, several of the once glittering Expo '92 pavilions lie empty and abandoned, the haunts of drug addicts and squatters and a tawdry reminder of what was a fine fiesta.

"Seville was a great exhibition and a great party but it left a serious urban problem behind," said Joao Paulo Velez, spokesman for Expo '98, the company organising the Lisbon

event.

From the start, the Portuguese have seen their international exhibition, as more of a development project than a timely chance to earn millions of dollars from tourists.

Unlike in Spain, where participating countries were responsible for the construction of their own exhibition stands, everything in Lisbon is being built by the operating company in order to ease planning, officials say.

And the plan is that everything will have a long-term use, with a corresponding buyer lined up well in advance, or it will be torn down immediately after the event.

"We are taking care that everything has a purpose in terms of urban development," Mr. Velez said.

The site covers some 815 acres along a depressed, five-km stretch of the Tagus. Apart from an old

hydroplane port, abandoned since the 1940s when it last received transatlantic flights, the area was home to an abattoir, oil tanks and a military munitions dump.

The exhibition itself will only occupy a central part, with the outlying area being turned over to housing and office development projects which are intended to revitalise the zone.

The plan calls for some 25,000 new residences to be built, while companies eventually moving into the area are expected to create around 18,000 new jobs, officials say.

So far some \$150 million worth of real estate has been sold, covering around a tenth of the full cost of the Expo '98 exhibition and development project.

But Velez says that by 2009, the property development side should have generated enough income to allow Expo officially to be wound up without a finan-

cial loss. "That is all we are trying to do, break even," he said.

The centrepiece of the exhibition, which opens its doors for five months from May 1998, will be a giant oceanarium, the largest ever built in Europe. Four sections — one for each of the world's oceans — will be home to 25,000 animals and fish.

The oceanarium will remain after the display closes, along with an exhibition hall that is to serve as headquarters for an international trade fair and a large, multi-sports centre.

Organisers expect Expo '98 to attract some 8.3 million visitors, more than 40 per cent of whom will be foreign tourists.

The overall boost to Portugal's tourism income during 1998 alone is forecast at around \$1.4 billion.

Refugees determined to secure rights

(Continued from page 1)

community attaches to dialogue and transparency.

"We wanted to hear the views of the refugees, and for our part to assure them that there are no secret plans in the multilaterals," Mr. Robinson said at a press conference.

Complaints from the refugees have focused on the autonomy accords signed between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel which, they say, to have side-stepped their plight.

Anxiety was further increased when the PLO succumbed to Israeli pressure to omit any explicit reference to U.N. Resolution 194 at the start of final status negotiations that were launched in Taba, Egypt on May 5.

Resolution 194 protects the rights of Palestinians who fled their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in the creation of the Jewish state. The resolution upholds the refugees' right of return or to receive compensation.

But complicating the issue further, definitions of who is a refugee are disputed. The application of a definition will determine, eventually, who holds the right to return.

Given the negative effect of the recent Taba talks on refugees, Mr. Robinson saw the delegation's visit as particularly timely.

Along with the Palestinian refugee question, final settlement negotiations also include the eventual status of the West Bank and Gaza, Arab East Jerusalem and Jewish settlements.

Until a just and lasting solution to the refugee problem is found, the mandate of the RWG is to improve the conditions of refugees and displaced persons without prejudicing their rights or their future status, Mr. Robinson noted.

Refugees are wary of attempts to consolidate their presence in host countries as opposed to honouring their rights under Resolution 194.

The mandate of the working group also aims at facilitating family reunification and contributing to the process of finding a lasting solution to the refugee problem, he said, adding that the RWG, as part of the multilaterals, "complements and supports the bilateral negotiations (on the refugee question) without being a substitute for them."

The delegation, which in-

cludes representatives of several leading donor countries, also met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and various government officials.

The Crown Prince stressed that the refugee problem was a regional issue and that the RWG should concentrate its efforts on the provision of integrated services and on improving the quality of life for refugees.

Jordan hosts 1.3 million refugees and between 700,000-800,000 displaced persons. About 20 per cent of these people reside in camps.

During their meetings with government officials, RWG representatives were told the Jordanian government provides around \$300 million in the form of services to refugees every year.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) briefed RWG delegates on the services provided to refugees while noting the difficulties in maintaining the level of those services in the face of the growing population.

In Jordan UNRWA has implemented many of RWG's projects, including school, medical centres and women's activity centres. Mr.

Robinson reported that more than \$1.30 billion had been "committed through or announced at RWG plenary sessions" to such projects.

He added that RWG had undertaken data base projects and supported non-governmental organisation (NGO) activities.

According to Mr. Robinson, refugees expressed support for UNRWA and its activities and emphasised the necessity for the continuation of its services until a permanent solution is attained.

UNRWA, which convened an informal meeting of major donors and host governments in Amman last week has

pledged not to reduce its services despite financial difficulties. Concern, though, was expressed over a premature expiration of the agency's mandate in 1999 — which coincides with a hoped-for end to final status negotiations.

The RWG delegation that visited Taba, Marka, Homs, Jerash and Beqaa camps, noted a deficiency in "some of the areas" of education, health, housing, sanitation and camp infrastructure. Mr. Robinson said without elaboration.

The mission will report findings to the RWG's next plenary session this year.

Shadow on Peres' campaign

(Continued from page 1)

"Iran is behind the murderers because that country is seeking to interfere in the democratic election campaign in Israel," Mr. Peres told a campaign meeting in a northern Israeli town.

"We have irrefutable proof that foreign elements are behind plans for new terrorist attacks," he said, declining to elaborate.

Israel public radio said Mr. Peres was referring to the case of a man who was severely injured early last month when a bomb he was preparing blew up in an East Jerusalem hotel room.

Israeli police have obtained court orders barring publication of any information about the incident or the identity and nationality of the suspect, who remains under police guard at a Jerusalem hospital.

Mr. Peres and Palestinian officials have repeatedly accused Iran of financing and directing attacks by movements opposed to the autonomy agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Mr. Peres said that since the last bombing in March, his government had foiled dozens of attempted attacks.

Jordanians see Israel as land of opportunity

AMMAN (AFP) — For hundreds of unemployed Jordanians seeking to escape the Kingdom's economic hardships, Israel has lost its pariah status and been transformed into a land of opportunity.

Scores of job seekers are hunting for vacancies in relatively prosperous Israel and hopefuls queue up on a daily basis on the doorstep of the Jewish state's embassy in Amman.

In searing heat youngsters, women and old men sit idly outside the embassy, which is housed in a five-star hotel, waiting to deliver their visa applications.

"We take our positions as early as 2 a.m. so we could get through to the consulate section before day ends," said 22-year-old plumber Ahmad.

Ahmad, like many of his generation, dreams of "an easier life with higher wages" in Israel, whose \$60 billion economy is ten times the size of Jordan's.

"Roughly 200 people tap our consulate section each day for the past two weeks," an Israeli diplomat told AFP Sunday. "But we have not yet opened our doors for working visas."

The Israeli embassy's press attaché Shalom Tourjman said the embassy "has so far rejected all applications and we do not plan to hire Jordanian manpower."

But under the influx of job seekers, "we accepted to put the applications on file pending possible approval," said Mr. Tourjman. "It started with a few people three months ago and it snowballed to some 200 applications each day."

Cash-strapped Jordan has unemployment of around 20 per cent, and the relatively high wages in Israel are leading many Jordanians to reappraise their attitude to the country considered an arch foe until it signed a peace treaty with the Kingdom in October 1994.

But Mr. Tourjman says the two countries are opposed to a flood of manpower from the Kingdom into Israel, favouring instead an economic partnership.

"Our priorities are to launch joint ventures in a bid to generate vacancies in Jordan rather than sending labour to Israel," said a Jordanian official.

The first of such enterprises was set up last year in Irbid, 88 kilometres north of Amman. The ready-to-wear clothing plant hires some 300 Jordanian workers.

Jordan exports highly-trained, skilled manpower, especially to the Gulf states, Europe and the United States.

In the 1980s, money sent home by expatriates used to make up the main item on the balance of payments — reaching up to \$1 billion

per year.

But some 300,000 Jordanians and Palestinians were evicted from Kuwait after it was invaded by Iraq in August 1990 and the return of expatriates has jammed an already saturated labour market in Jordan.

Israel is short of manpower after deciding in late February to enforce a blockade of the autonomous West Bank and Gaza Strip after the first in a wave of suicide bombings by Islamic militants that left around 60 dead in Israel.

To replace Palestinian workers barred from leaving the self-rule territories Israel has hired labourers from eastern European states such as Romania.

Mr. Tourjman said most of the Jordanian applications belonged to unskilled labourers who wanted to upgrade their economic status.

However, many Jordanians have not waited for an official working visa to seek a better life and have crossed into Israel to hunt for jobs on tourist visas.

"My uncle, a carpenter, is working now in Israel and he sends his family roughly \$750 per month," says Ahmad from the Wihdat camp — one of thirteen Palestinian camps in Jordan.

"It is even better than working in the United States," the Palestinian refugee said.

Lebanese premier calls for European aid

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri called Monday for EU finance to help his country's \$15 billion reconstruction drive in a speech to EU foreign ministers here.

"Our public investment programme will cost around \$15 billion in the years to

come," Mr. Hariri told the 15 EU ministers.

He said it was imperative for Lebanon to accelerate economic development but the means to do it "will surpass the resources of the Lebanese government."

"Therefore the contribution and support of

He said \$40 million would also be needed to repair war damage to various other services. He recognised, however, that not all of the money could come from the EU. Apart from immediate financial aid, Mr. Hariri said Beirut was also interested in concluding a cooperation

accord with the EU.

The EU has already committed more than four billion ECUs (\$4.8 billion) as part of an aid programme to Mediterranean countries, including Lebanon, until 1999.

friendly countries has become an urgent need," he

added, estimating Lebanon needed \$1 billion a year for five years "in the form of donations or long-term loans at beneficial rates."

Mr. Hariri said \$324 million was needed for the public sector and the environment, basic infrastructure such as re-

constructing the electricity grid and road network needed \$270 million, social services, education and health \$216 million, and agriculture and industry \$150 million.

Closure is causing Palestinian deficit to soar — diplomat

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority's budget deficit is skyrocketing due to Israel's military blockade on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and could end the year seven times higher than forecast, Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal said Tuesday.

"Because of the closures, the budget deficit for this fiscal year is not the forecasted \$25 million, but perhaps more than \$180 million," said Mr. Godal, whose country heads the group of donors formed to help the Palestinian self-rule authority.

"We hope for the cessation of the border closures as soon as possible," Mr. Godal added after meeting here with Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip following a series of suicide bombings by Palestinian Islamic radicals in February and early

March.

The clampdown has prevented tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching jobs in Israel and choked off most trade in and out of the Palestinian autonomy areas.

"It goes without saying that (the closures) are really negative to hampering a positive Palestinian economic and social development," Mr. Godal said at a joint press conference with Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Godal went on to praise the "very efficient" work of the autonomy authority "considering your present very difficult circumstances."

"It is very nice to see with my own eyes how things are improving year-by-year," he said.

But he also warned Mr. Arafat's self-rule administration that pledges of international aid were linked to further progress in negotiations with Israel which entered their final stage earlier this month.

Iraq's dinar main winner in oil talks with U.N.

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's battered currency could be the main winner in the country's protracted oil-for-food talks with the United Nations.

Iraqi traders hope the dinar, which at a time was reported to be less in value than the paper used in its printing, will soar considerably once Iraqi crude exports hit international markets again.

Prior to the start of the talks Iraqis with access to currency invested in property, gold or hard cash. Now a person's wealth in Baghdad is determined by the amount of dinars stashed away, either in a bank or in the cellar of the house.

The talks, which started on Feb. 6, are in their fourth round and once concluded would allow Iraq partial oil sales worth \$2 billion in six months.

The initial boon for Iraqis was the dramatic gains their paper currency made against the U.S. dollar. It suddenly rose from 3,000 to the dollar to 1,000 and at times surged to about 500.

It has been a boom season for Iraqi speculators and money changers. Comments on the oil talks would either send the dinar soaring or falling. Optimistic remarks Monday lift it to 650 against

the U.S. dollar from 1,000. News that more knotty issues were still blocking an agreement lowered it to 750 Tuesday.

Since the start of the oil talks people with hard cash or gold have found their savings dwindle by at least threefold and those with dinars saw the value of their deposits skyrocket in the same way.

Baghdad traders say the talks have made them cling to their dinars. They say even Jordanian traders, who shunned Iraqi currency in the past, are now buying dinars hoping a deal on oil exports would further increase the value of Iraq's currency.

Even the demand for small denomination bills, which Iraqi traders refused to deal with, rose sharply and the government has not yet been able to meet the current chronic shortage of small change.

The price of some services and goods in Baghdad is currently less than the 25 dinar bill.

Commuters using public or private transport in Baghdad complain that bus conductors charge them 25 dinars and keep the change. Lower denominations of one, five or 10 dinar bills were almost worthless before the talks.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your home and see what can be done today to make it more charming and functional. A stranger could prove very disappointing at this time, so proceed with your own ideas for some new project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Begin the morning today happily by getting in touch with persons you admire and make appointments to see them at a later time. This evening you can proceed with some new career activity with the assistance of some bigwig.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get an early start today on bringing more good things into your life by working for them industriously. Later this evening is a good time for you to complete that new project which has taken so much of your valuable time.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) First make a plan to gain your secret longings today and then carry through with it and get right results for you to proceed. Later tonight will be quite beneficial for your success if you get the assistance of some knowledgeable person.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day today to see and be in the company of interesting friends and acquaintances who can be of help to you in some manner. The evening will be beneficial for you and your mate if you spend some quiet time together.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you want to be more successful at present interests today, it is wise to return favours to others and gain more goodwill. Later this evening is very good for you for to complete any career activities which are delayed.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An early start outside business affairs can bring great results today, especially with the assistance of those who are prominent and have the knowledge to make any difficult situation seem child's play.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There are new conditions around you today, and these bring a fine chance to advance so be open to new ideas. This evening will be very special for you in terms handling any difficult situation which comes in your direction.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Stop procrastinating today where business affairs are concerned since you can handle them very well at this time. This evening will be quite beneficial for you to proceed on some important career activities which are pressing.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Talk with more practical persons today than you about how to make better arrangements for prosperity in the days ahead. This evening you can have to good times out on the town some close friends.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study your regular activities today and plan to handle them in a more organized manner, and you will be more successful. Later tonight you can progress on some new ideas for your prosperity with the help of a bigwig.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Do those things today which bring you a fine, peaceful feeling and make you feel that evening is well with the world. Tonight will be special for your loved ones if you do some activities together.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

Malaysia outlines 5-year plan for steady growth

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad unveiled a five-year multi-billion-dollar development blueprint Monday to steady economic growth and erase Malaysia's burgeoning current account deficit.

Presenting the so-called Seventh Malaysia Plan to parliament, Mr. Mahathir outlined plans to bolster Malaysia's technology base and services sector to turn around the current account shortfall by 2000.

The plan "is designed to bring Malaysia to the threshold of the 21st century not only stronger economically, but also more united as a nation," Mr. Mahathir told parliament as he submitted the 743-page report.

The blueprint outlined a

38 per cent increase in development spending from the previous five-year programme to 162.5 billion ringgit (\$65 billion) for the five years to 2000. Much of that spending will be ploughed into infrastructure.

The plan outlined a huge privatisation programme, higher education spending, higher productivity, and a shift from labour-intensive industry to high technology.

The government aims to rein in Malaysia's economic expansion to eight percent a year, down from the rapid annual 8.7 percent growth recorded on average under the previous plan, Mr. Mahathir said.

Eight straight years of robust economic growth above eight percent had con-

tributed to a widening current account deficit, inflationary pressures, infrastructure constraints and an acute labour crunch.

The plan aims to turn around the current account balance — which deteriorated into 17.8 billion ringgit (7.1 billion dollars) deficit in 1995 from a deficit of 2.8 billion ringgit in 1990 — to a surplus of 1,836 billion ringgit by 2000.

"One way to address the deficit will be local production of capital and intermediate goods and components to reduce imports," Mr. Mahathir said. Malaysia, he said, would now discourage labour-intensive industries with capital investments per worker of less than 55,000

ringgit (\$22,000) to ease its reliance on foreign labour.

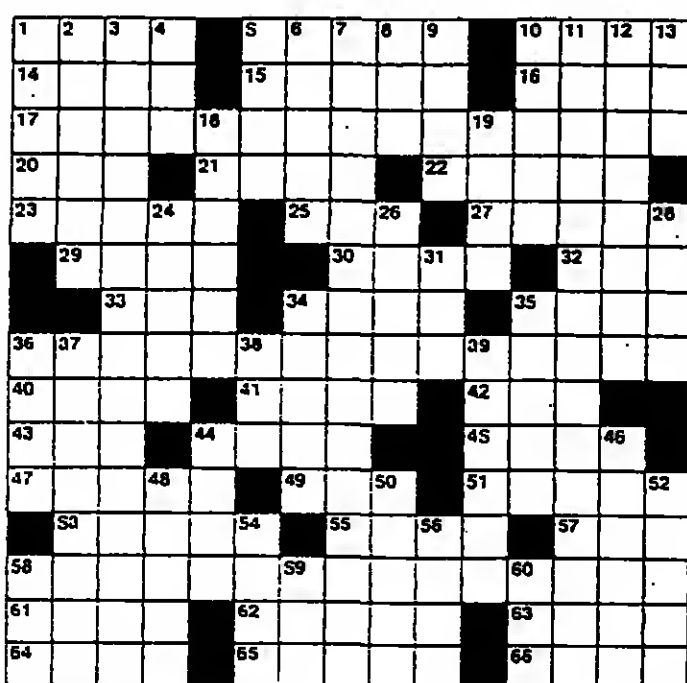
The government's recruitment of foreigners to help bridge the worker-shortage gap in the past years had further strained the current account balance. The 1.2 million workers brought in mainly from neighbouring Indonesia, Bangladesh and

the Philippines remit 2.5 billion ringgit (\$1 billion) abroad annually.

Mr. Mahathir said steps would also be taken to boost tourism and port transshipment as well as to reduce outflows on services such as insurance, freight, payments for overseas education and consultancy services.

THE Daily Crossword by Chuck Deodene

ACROSS
1 Court great
5 Aesopian tale
10 At a distance
14 Ring out
15 Perceived by the ear
16 Accumulated traditions
17 Eddie Cochran song
20 Sphere
21 Thiel's spoils
22 Shearer of "The Red Shoes"
23 Steam room
25 Set upon, as hounds
27 Lewd one
29 Stumble
30 Swing around
32 Yoo—
33 All-purpose MDs
34 Norse god
35 Taro root
36 John Gisham novel



40 Spine-tingling
41 Rampaging
42 Computer acronym
43 Go, team!
44 Humus
45 Mid-month period
47 That is, Lat.
49 Flop
51 French patron saint
53 Shine
55 Household member
57 One of seven
58 D.C. landmark
61 Indians
62 Latex or tempera
63 The best
64 Salon offering
65 Outburst
66 Flying pest

DOWN
1 Lhasa — (dogs)
2 Pointillist
Georges

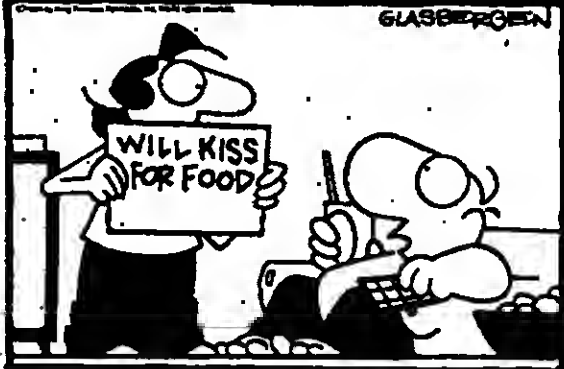
3 Meat-enhancing mix
4 Shade tree
5 Gambling game
6 Jam
7 Ingredients?
8 Flight from justice
9 Sch. type
10 TV's "Kate & —"
11 Time, to Einstein
12 Phone prefix
13 Legal matter
18 Pass by
19 Tree trunk
24 Chilly
26 Concealing garment
28 Filly's loot
31 Ash holder
34 Skittish
35 Wear away
36 Actress Halcher
37 Canal control
38 Philosopher — tse

39 Kind of shower or bouquet
44 FBI, e.g.
46 Brown pigment
48 Earthquake
50 Intimidate

L.D.P. CRODIN SCOT
AIGOP REACT ARGD
U.R.S.A. OF FIFTE WALL
DIETIT: ITUS LIEVEL
DIDIS SOLDIER
GIVIE, THE GATE
A.R.E.N.A. RAINFALL
DIOTE PTERS D.H.L.O.
SINORITTING C.RAIMS
H.E.D.G.E.T.H.E.B.E.T.
S.M.A.R.T.I.V. LOUIT
J.U.I.C.E. AILMENTS
D.N.T.H.I.E.F.E.N.I.C.E. L.E.I.A.K.
S.U.R.I.E. A.V.D.I.D. L.A.I.C.E.
S.I.P.E.D. C.A.N.T.I.D. T.O.W.I.

52 Bob of "Full House"
54 Swabs
56 Tiny arachnid
58 Trophy
59 Drink like Fido
60 Hammarskjöld

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



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Peanuts



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Smith leads Hawks past Orlando

ATLANTA (R) — Steve Smith scored 35 points, nailing seven of Atlanta's 12 three-pointers, as the Hawks avoided a playoff sweep by beating the Orlando Magic 104-99 on Monday.

Atlanta watched a 20-point halftime lead disappear but recovered to hand Orlando its first playoff defeat this year.

The Magic, who swept Detroit in three in the first round and won the first three games from Atlanta, lead the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal series three games to one with game five set for Wednesday in Orlando.

Horace Grant had 29 points and 20 rebounds and Penny Hardaway also scored 29 to lead the Magic.

Shaquille O'Neal finished with 19 points, but was a woeful 5-of-17 from the free throw line.

"You got to tip your hat to the Hawks, it was a great game," said Hardaway.

The Hawks had five players in double figures as Christian Laettner scored 17, Mookie Blaylock, who drained four three-pointers, chipped in 14 and 11 assists, Stacey Augmon added 13 points and Grant Long, 11.

"Today's game was a pride game," said Laettner. "None of us wanted to get swept. We came out and played with a cut of heart and determination."

"I think it was just a case where we were just aggressive and Smithy hit everything."

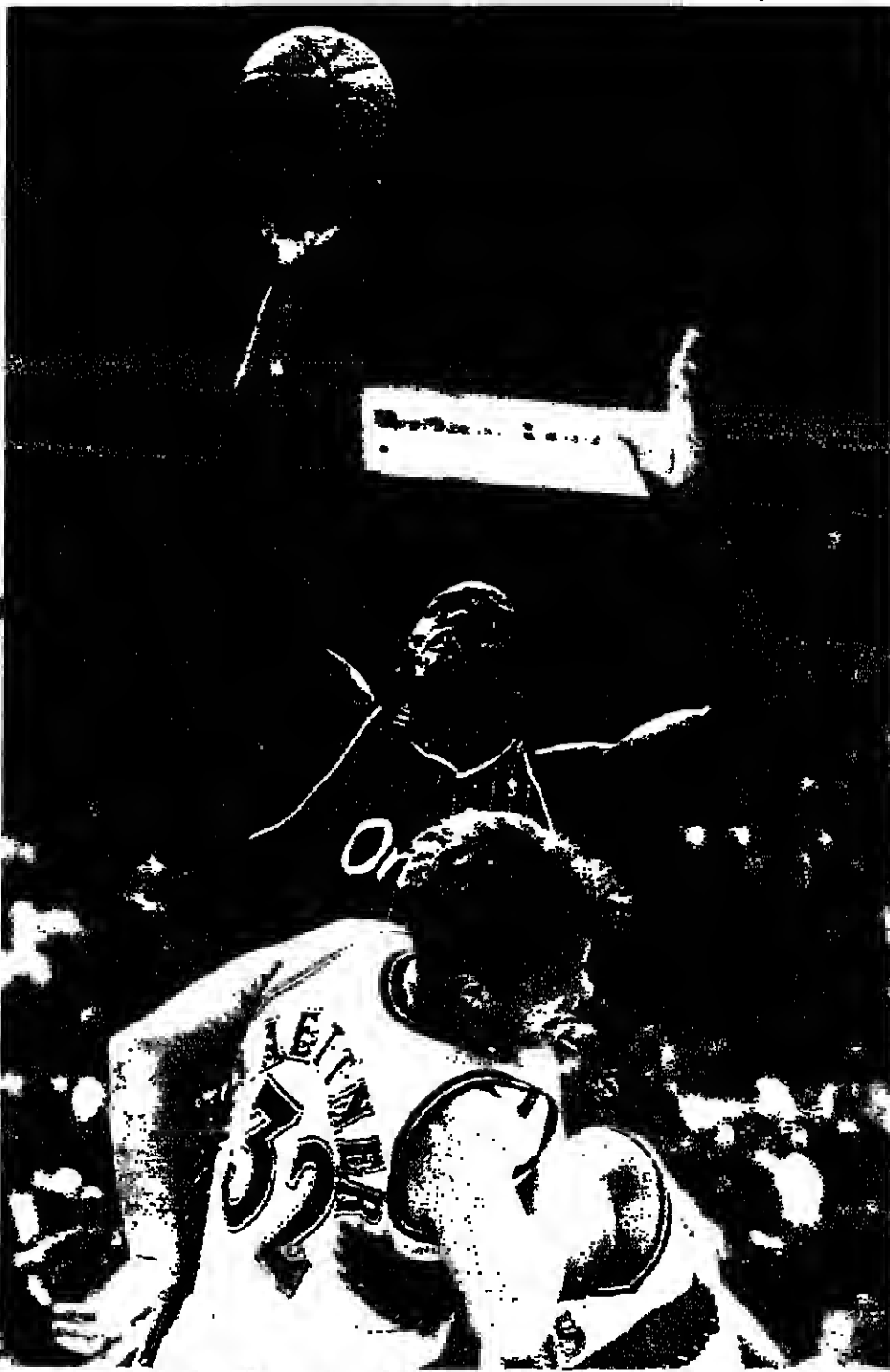
Smith scored 23 of his points in the first half as Atlanta built a commanding 67-47 halftime lead.

The Hawks were on fire in the first quarter, hitting 16-of-23 shots, including 7-of-10 from three-point range to set a club record for points in a quarter with 44. Smith had 16 points and Laettner 11 of his 17 in the quarter.

But Orlando came out flying in the third quarter and outscored Atlanta 30-9 in the first nine minutes to take a 77-76 lead.

Smith hit a three-pointer and a baseline jumper as the Hawks snapped out of their third-quarter funk by starting the fourth on a 12-5 run that put them back in front 94-88.

"We never quit it," said Blaylock. "We knew they



Orlando Magic's Shaquille O'Neal crashes into the Atlanta Hawk's Christian Laettner during game four of second round playoff action at the Omni May 13. The Magic lead the series 3-0 (Reuters photo)

were going to make a run. I think we just kept our composure and won this ballgame tonight."

ter long hit a corner jumper for Atlanta, O'Neal missed a pair of free throws and Smith converted a jumper in the

"They're a good team and they made a good run, but the thing is to be able to withstand it," said Hawks coach Lenny Wilkens.

"I thought that our players showed a lot of poise during that stretch because it's real easy to slide under. The effort that was given by the team was tremendous."

NBA PLAYOFFS

A book shot by O'Neal pulled Orlando within 98-97 with 1:31 remaining. But at

lane with 40 seconds left to give Atlanta a 102-97 advantage.

his back in practice Friday. Kukoc is averaging 11.2 points and 4.2 rebounds in five playoff games, but had made just 1-of-24 shots from three-point range.

Kukoc likely to miss Bulls-Knicks match

CHICAGO (AFP) — Chicago forward Toni Kukoc is expected to miss his third consecutive playoff game when the Bulls try to eliminate New York from

the National Basketball Association playoffs. Kukoc missed both weekend games at New York due to a lower back injury. The Bulls split the

games to take a 3-1 edge in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semi-final series.

The Croatian star hurt

We're too good to lose, Beckenbauer warns Bordeaux

BORDEAUX (AFP) — Bayern Munich boss Franz Beckenbauer taunted UEFA Cup final opponents Bordeaux on Monday, claiming his side were clearly superior.

Beckenbauer, whose side have just failed to win the German championship but who go into Wednesday's second leg with a 2-0 advantage, said: "I'm not worried. We won't panic. We are better than Bordeaux."

But the French side will have one distinct advantage. While Bayern mull over their failure to beat Borussia Dortmund to the Bundesliga crown, Bordeaux are ecstatic after avoiding relegation to the French second division.

The French side, the surprise side of the tournament after only qualifying via the Intercontinental Cup, drew 2-2 draw with Paris Saint Germain to avoid the drop at the weekend.

They will be further lifted by the return of central figures Zinedine Zidane and Christophe Dugarry.

"Getting the one point we needed on Saturday has taken away a lot of pressure and tension," said skipper Bixente Lizarazu. "We're going into the game relaxed and with confidence."

The reappearance of Zidane, the Bordeaux playmaker, and Dugarry, its target man, after both were suspended for the first tie is likely to pose the Germans new problems at the back.

More importantly, the two French internationals have a special reason for wanting to shine, with Italian and Spanish sides hovering in the wings hoping to lure them away at the end of the season.

Dugarry, however, refused to discuss rumours of his departure. "It's clear to me that I will have to leave to progress but nothing has been sorted yet and I don't want to discuss it just yet," he said.

Gernot Rohr, Bordeaux's German coach who was at Bayern during his playing career, said: "It's clear having them this time is a big plus."

But he refused to name his side although he hinted Anthony Bancarel, who scored both goals against Paris Saint Germain, would be rewarded with a starting slot.

Bayern's international pedigree, however — it won the European cup three times during the mid-Bordeaux has never won a major European prize — suggests they should be strong enough to hold onto its advantage away from home.

More importantly, they have won all five of their UEFA Cup away matches this season, scoring 17 goals and conceding just three.

Striker Jurgen Klinsmann backed up Beckenbauer's optimism, saying: "We always play better in Europe. We'll bring the cup back to Munich."

Bayern's French international striker Jean-Pierre Papin will miss the match through suspension, while Dietmar Hamann is injured. Bordeaux will go into the game without Geoffrey Toyes, also injured.

JORDAN TIMES
TEL: 699634/684311

Ripken nears Kinugasa's endurance streak

BALTIMORE (AFP) — Baltimore shortstop Cal Ripken Jr., who last year set the record for playing consecutive major league baseball games, now has his sights on the world mark held by Japan's Satcho Kinugasa.

Ripken took a victory lap around Camden yards ballpark last September after breaking Lou Gehrig's North American record of playing 2,130 games in a row.

But the all-time iron man mark remains with Kinugasa, who played in 2,215 consecutive games for the Hiroshima Toyo Carp from 1970-1987.

Barring rainouts or an unprecedented absence from the lineup, Ripken would match Kinugasa's mark June 12 in Detroit and break it the next night when the Orioles play in Kansas City.

"I don't know what to expect that night, just like I didn't know what to expect last year," Ripken said. "Intellectually I know what it means. But how that translates to any kind of festivities or added responsibility on my part, I have no idea."

While Ripken is unfamiliar with Kinugasa's total and achievements, he respects the endurance needed for such a

feat. "The world record should be acknowledged because it is still a tremendous achievement, whether it's in the Japanese league or the American league," Ripken said.

"It's a tribute to perseverance, a tribute to the sport. I have always understood that and always respected that as an accomplishment."

The Kansas City Royals plan to have Kinugasa on hand when Ripken breaks the mark, although nothing as extravagant as the celebration for surpassing Gehrig is planned.

Kinugasa now works as a part-time journalist for a Japanese newspaper and plans to cover the event as well as take part in the ceremonies at Detroit and Kansas City. The Orioles plan to honour Ripken June 17 in their first home game following the record breaker.

But for now, Ripken is keeping as low-key about this record as he was about approaching Gehrig's mark.

"I try not to think about it," he said. "I try to keep my focus as pure and as honest as I can."

ing any other challenger until a lawsuit is settled.

Lewis, who narrowly defeated Ray Mercer in New York on Friday, claims he was wrongfully passed over to fight for the WBC title when Tyson was allowed to challenge Frank Bruno in Las Vegas in March. King has said Tyson would drop his title rather than agree to Lewis' demand for more than the 10 million dollars

Olympics, MLS try to lift soccer in U.S.

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama (AP) — As the countdown to Olympic soccer continues, the clock is also ticking on the game's future with U.S. sports fans.

This is the chance U.S. soccer enthusiasts have been waiting for since the United States played host to the World Cup in 1994. Major League Soccer, the latest attempt at a major professional soccer league in this country, will dovetail with Olympic soccer rounds in five U.S. cities this summer.

"I think it has its best chance ever now," said Preston Goldfarb, a soccer coach in Birmingham who is instrumental in that city's preparation for Olympic play. "Will it remain? I certainly hope so."

Olympic soccer quarter-final rounds also will be held in Washington, D.C., Orlando and Miami. The medal round will be played in Athens, Georgia.

While World Cup and Olympic soccer are always a big draw, soccer has never caught on as a fifth major pro sport with baseball, football, basketball and hockey.

Attendance at MLS games, for the most part, has been strong. But soccer's deliberate pace and

the lack of timeouts have made it a poor performer on television.

"It makes it harder to get to the fridge for an extra beer," admitted Seamus Malin, a renowned soccer announcer.

The matches also have faced the same old problem that has doomed soccer in the past: where are all the goals?

In a total of 24 games in the inaugural season of MLS, there have been 99 goals — about four per game.

On the ESPN cable network, sportscasters have a hard time keeping a straight face when they do MLS highlights. In one segment on a game between the San Jose Clash and the Dallas Burn, an anchor commented, "the Clash and Burn crashed and burned."

Why? Not a single goal was scored in regulation. The game ended in a shoot-out.

Soccer traditionalists scoff at such a narrow-minded view.

"They say it's boring because they want it to go away," said Malin, who is a professor at Harvard University when he's not announcing soccer games on television. "They don't know anything about it, and

that challenges their status and their identities."

The last major pro soccer league in the United States, the North American Soccer League, was doomed by overspending, poor planning and the absence of marketable American players. Malin, a commentator for World Cup Games in '94, said that won't happen again.

"This pro league is being built the right way," said Malin, noting its modest 10-team format. "That's the reason I feel more optimistic than I have in a long time."

Those who want soccer to succeed say it must find a way to keep top U.S. players from going overseas. Malin pointed out that at least six players currently in European leagues came from U.S. colleges.

"That's what I mean about players leaving the country," Malin said.

To whatever extent Olympic soccer generates interest in MLS, it must find there will always be the debate about the sport's future with America's short-attention-span fan. Some think changes must be made, like making the nets bigger and breaking the game into quarters to allow for TV commercials.

Again, the traditionalists cringe.

"Quarters to me will completely ruin the game of soccer," said Goldfarb, who coaches at Birmingham-Southern College and writes newspaper columns about the sport.

Other than money, Malin can't understand why MLS would want commercials. He said one day he was flipping back and forth between a soccer match and an national football league playoff game and felt like throwing his remote control at the TV.

"I switched over (to the NFL game) eight times," Malin said. "Seven of the eight times, I got a commercial. And I'm supposed to be watching a sporting event?"

The bottom line is that U.S. soccer's future is, as always, uncertain. And with a new project under way, there is optimism from those who don't want to see the past repeated.

"Everybody dreams in this game that someday there will be 50,000 people in the stands, like there are in the NFL," Malin said. "But that's a dream, and some dreams don't come true."

"But that doesn't mean the game can't exist."

Edberg represents dying breed of men's tennis

ROME (AP) — Sefar Edberg, in the midst of a farewell tour, knows he's a relic in men's tennis.

The former top-ranked player is ready to leave the game as two Edberg trademarks — the serve-and-volley style and sportsmanship — both decline.

"You have to do more than just play tennis. Players have to take responsibility," the unseeded Swede said Monday after advancing to the second round of the Italian Open with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Jani Siemerink of the Netherlands. "But people have to explain that to the young players."

Tuesday's schedule at the clay court tournament featured top seed and world No. 2 Thomas Muster opening defense of his title against fellow Austrian Herbert Wiltschko, a qualifier.

Other top second-day encounters included No. 3 seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov against Italian qualifier Corrado Borroni, who upset the Russian in the first round here a year ago, and Spain's Roberto Carretero — who won his first tour title at Hamburg on Sunday — against Mark Philippoussis of Australia.

Much like their counterparts in other sports, the latest generation of tennis stars has been criticized for worrying too much about sponsorships and money and for failing to play through the slightest injuries.

"Personally, I think that there's not enough professionalism on the part of some players at the top of the rankings," tournament director Franco Bartoni said after announcing that the ATP had failed to lure either No. 3 Andre Agassi or No. 5 Boris Becker to Rome.

There are not too many players who can boast, as Edberg did of himself Monday, that "you can only give so much to the game."

He'll end his pro career after the Stockholm Open in November.

"I've been living with tennis nearly 24 hours a day for so long," he said. "You reach the stage where you think, 'Maybe I've had enough. Another thing Edberg could explain to the young players — how to play serve-and-volley tennis to perfection. His finesse earned six Grand Slam singles titles."



Sergi Brugnera Italian Open

Goran's temper rises with serves Brugnera crashes out of rain-hit event

ROME (AP) — Decidedly unhappy, Goran Ivanisevic's temper rose with the speed of the serves on the way to a straight set victory over Greg Rusedski in first round play Monday at the Italian Open.

The No. 2 seed broke his racket, received a warning from the chair and kept muttering to himself at the baseline, although the Croatian won relatively easily, 7-6, (7-3), 6-3 in the battle of big left-handed servers.

He later pronounced himself unhappy with the court and the "terrible" balls — both too slow — and with the state of his game — "so far not too good."

One seed who had reason to complain was No. 8 Sergi Brugnera of Spain, the runner-up here last year. The two-time French Open champion lost 6-4, 6-4 to Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands.

"I'm still not comfortable on the court," the Spaniard said, noting that he has not recovered fully from a right foot injury suffered in December.

Other seeds advanced with

little trouble.

Two Americans moved ahead as No. 15 Todd Martin ousted Slovakian Karol Kucera 6-1, 6-3, and No. 12 Maliva Washington beat Italy's Gianluca Pozzi 6-4, 6-3.

Fourth-seeded Thomas Enqvist of Sweden beat Zimbabwe's Byron Black 6-2, 6-1; Spain's Alberto Costa, seeded 11th, defeated Denmark's Kenneth Carlsen 6-1, 6-7 (3-7), 6-4; and No. 16 Cedric Pioline of France got past Italian Stefano Pescosolido 6-3, 6-2.

The unseeded Stefan Edberg, the former world No. 1 from Sweden, who's making a farewell appearance in Rome, defeated Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-4 (see separate story).

After Edberg left the court, rain interrupted play with about a third of the day's matches still to be played. Matches resumed after a delay of nearly three hours.

Top seed Thomas Muster is looking for a repeat title at the \$2.2 million event, which is a major warmup for the

French Open, the long Grand Slam played on clay.

Ivanisevic, 24, twice bounced his racket off the Foro Italico's red clay after losing points, the second time drawing the mandatory warning when the racket broke.

In a match that saw both men serve at around 200 kilometres an hour, Ivanisevic was angered that he was broken while serving for the first set while leading 5-4.

The 64th-ranked Rusedski, a 22-year-old Canadian enlisted by Britain to help its dismal tennis fortunes, actually had a set point himself in the 12th game, but Ivanisevic used a delicate cross-court forehand to pass him.

"He played the big points much better than I did. That's the difference between a top 10 player and where I am now," Rusedski said.

Ivanisevic has won four tournaments this year. But in March, he was forced to withdraw from the final at Key Biscayne with a neck injury. "Since then, I can't find my game," he said.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMAR HERSHI
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THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

North-South vulnerable, West deals.

NORTH
♠ 4
♥ K 2
♦ K 8 6 5
♣ A K J 7 2

WEST
♠ A J 10 7 2
♥ A Q J 9 8
♦ 10 7
♣ 9

EAST
♠ Q 8 5
♥ 7 6
♦ Q 10 4 2
♣ 10 8 6 3

SOUTH
♠ K 8 3
♥ 10 8 4 3
♦ A 9 8
♣ Q 5 4

The bidding:
WEST: 1♠, 2♠, 3NT, 4NT, 5NT, 6NT, 7NT, 8NT, 9NT, 10NT, 11NT, 12NT, 13NT, 14NT, 15NT, 16NT, 17NT, 18NT, 19NT, 20NT, 21NT, 22NT, 23NT, 24NT, 25NT, 26NT, 27NT, 28NT, 29NT, 30NT, 31NT, 32NT, 33NT, 34NT, 35NT, 36NT, 37NT, 38NT, 39NT, 40NT, 41NT, 42NT, 43NT, 44NT, 45NT, 46NT, 47NT, 48NT, 49NT, 50NT, 51NT, 52NT, 53NT, 54NT, 55NT, 56NT, 57NT, 58NT, 59NT, 60NT, 61NT, 62NT, 63NT, 64NT, 65NT, 66NT, 67NT, 68NT, 69NT, 70NT, 71NT, 72NT, 73NT, 74NT, 75NT, 76NT, 77NT, 78NT, 79NT, 80NT, 81NT, 82NT, 83NT, 84NT, 85NT, 86NT, 87NT, 88NT, 89NT, 90NT, 91NT, 92NT, 93NT, 94NT, 95NT, 96NT, 97NT, 98NT, 99NT, 100NT.

Opening lead: Queen of ♣

Every beginner's textbook has a table of opening leads, and by and large these are correct. West followed the hook slavishly, and learned that even textbooks can be wrong sometimes.

Once South showed a spade stopper and interest in game, North had ample values to accept even though a sixth club would have provided a margin of comfort. The outcome was felicitous.

Afraid that the opponents had spades doubly stopped, West elected the textbook lead of the queen. Dummy's king won and South could have to come from an endplay.

Declarer cashed all seven minor-suit winners, coming down to the guarded king of spades and 10 x x in hearts. On the last club West had to discard from A 10 7 in spades

and A J 9 of hearts. Regardless of what West pitched a heart to the ace of hearts, the king of spades would be the fulfilling trick.

With a sure entry in the ace of spades, the textbook lead was far from best in this situation. The correct lead is the ace of hearts. If dummy turns up with two or three hearts headed by the ten, West must

tricks with the queen and must score four tricks in the suit. Similarly, if there are three hearts up to the king on the board, declarer again continues with the queen. In these cases an initial lead of the queen would have worked equally well.

Where the opening leader gains is when the cards are distributed as in the diagram. Now West can simply play a low heart at trick two, and the defenders will come to four hearts and the ace of spades regardless of how declarer maneuvers.

Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath meet women's basketball team, urge continued effort to upgrade standard

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Amman — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath Tuesday urged the Kingdom's Under-18 women's basketball team to continue their perseverance and promised to provide them with facilities to enable them to attain higher standards and continue to best represent the Kingdom.

The comments came at a meeting Princess Sarvath had with the team to which Prince Hassan unexpectedly arrived following a field trip in army workshops.

Jordan's U-18 team represented the Kingdom as the first and only Arab country to take part in the 13th Asian Junior Championship for Women which was held in Bangkok, Thailand April 21-28.

Twelve Asian teams took part in the week-long competition. Jordan came in eighth after scoring victories over Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. Other participating countries were eventual champions China, Japan, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, India, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Two of Jordan's players, Hala Ghattas and Zina Farah were named among the top 10 rebounders in the championship.

While in Bangkok, the team had received a cable of congratulations from Princess Sarvath on their encouraging performance.

Players and team officials expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the princess for her interest and encouragement. Just as the

delegation was about to take a group photo with Princess Sarvath, Crown Prince Hassan joined the meeting and to the delight of players joined them in the group photo. The Crown Prince welcomed the players and encouraged them to keep up their good work to achieve an advanced standing in future tournaments.

Princess Sarvath told team officials that the Baccalaureate School basketball court, which is the closest to international specifications among other courts in the Kingdom, should be utilised for their practice from now on.

Princess Sarvath has been following up women's basketball ever since national teams made a comeback last summer following a 12-year absence from the Arab and international scenes.

The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF), headed by Awad Haddad, regrouped the women's team last year when Jordan's women's senior team participated in the Asian Championship in Japan for the first time. The team had then undertaken their own fund-raising campaign which later fell short of target. Their Royal Highnesses Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath made the trip possible by a generous donation that covered the team's travel expenses. The gesture was highly appreciated and was a dream come true for the players.

Asian basketball officials lauded Jordan's participation in the tournament then just as they did in the latest championship in Bangkok. The junior team is



The Kingdom's U-18 women's basketball team expected to be a good 17th women's championship which will be held either in Jakarta, or begin preparations for the Bangkok.

Graf breaks Navratilova's record after 332nd week at No. 1

NEW YORK (AP) — Even Steffi Graf is impressed.

"I realised that I have been No. 1 for an extremely long time, but I never really was the kind of person who counted the weeks or the years," Graf said after setting a record for holding the No. 1 ranking the most weeks in her career. "But to hear the number, it is pretty amazing."

Graf has been atop the rankings — either alone or co-ranked with Monica Seles — for 332 weeks, snapping the mark of 331 Graf shared with Martina Navratilova. By contrast, the men's tennis record is held by Ivan Lendl, who was top-ranked for 270 weeks.

"Knowing that no one has ever achieved something like that is extremely special to me, because I know how difficult it is to stay there for such a long time," Graf said.

Graf set the record when the new weekly rankings were announced Monday. After suffering losses in two of her last four matches, Graf added this week's German Open to her clay court schedule.

She lost last week to 15-year-old Martina Hingis of Switzerland after struggling through two earlier matches at the Italian Open. On April 28, she lost to Kimiko Date as Japan upset Germany in a Fed Cup tie.

"Actually, I am not feeling too bad about the two matches that I lost," Graf said by telephone from Berlin on Monday. "I just didn't play as I am used to playing, so I haven't been upset about the losses that I have had."

"I was really surprised about the two wins that I have had — starting the year late and winning two tournaments. It is the middle of May and I have only played three tournaments."

It was in Berlin that Graf burst onto the tennis scene in 1985 as a gangly 15-year-old, pushing Chris Evert before losing in the final. She returned the next year to capture the first of her eight



Steffi Graf

German Open titles, defeating Navratilova in straight sets.

Since then, she has lost only once on the clay courts in Berlin, to Seles in the 1990 final.

Because of a special Corel WTA tour rule, Graf shares the No. 1 spot in the weekly rankings with Seles, who trails far behind in fourth place in the number of weeks — 152 — she has been ranked No. 1 in the world.

Seles was No. 1 when she was stabbed by a spectator during a match in Hamburg, Germany, in April 1993. When she returned to the court in August, the WTA tour gave her a special ranking, naming her co-No. 1 for one year or six tournaments, whichever came first.

Her next tournament will be her sixth, when another

special ranking consideration will be in effect until she has either played in 14 tournaments or 18 months have passed since her return.

Only six women have captured the top spot since computer rankings began in November 1975: Graf, Seles, Navratilova, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Chris Evert and Tracy Austin.

Evert held the No. 1 spot a total of 262 weeks, Austin 22 weeks and Sanchez Vicario, currently ranked No. 2, 12 weeks.

Behind Lendl on the men's tour, Jimmy Connors was ranked No. 1 for 268 weeks, John McEnroe 170 and Pete Sampras, the current No. 1, for 121 weeks.

Graf first became No. 1 at the age of 18 on Aug. 17, 1987. It was the last time Navratilova was No. 1 after

dominating women's tennis for 10 years.

The German right-hander also was ranked No. 1 from Aug. 5-11, 1991; Aug. 19-Sept. 8, 1991; June 7, 1993-Feb. 5, 1995; Feb. 20-26, 1995; April 10-May 14, 1995, and June 12, 1995, to the present.

Since then Graf has held the No. 1 ranking for 49 consecutive weeks, being co-ranked No. 1 with Seles since Aug. 15, 1995. Graf also holds the record for most consecutive weeks at No. 1 — 186.

To stay on top, Graf has had to battle more than her on-court opponents. She has been plagued with injuries the past few years and underwent an operation on her foot in December.

"The foot is perfect," she said Monday. "My back is not too bad, either. Physically, I think I can't be much better."

Then there's her other problem. Her father Peter Graf and tax adviser Joachim Eckardt have been charged in Germany with tax evasion, although prosecutors say the player has not been incriminated in the case.

Still, the mental pressure has admittedly affected her concentration, if not her game.

Latest rankings:

1. Steffi Graf (Germany)
2. Monica Seles (U.S.)
3. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)
4. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
5. Iva Majoli (Croatia)
6. Anke Huber (Germany)
7. Chanda Rubin (U.S.)
8. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
9. Kimiko Date (Japan)
10. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
11. Brenda Schultz-McCarthy (Netherlands)

7th Arab Cup Winners' Cup

Faisali hold Qatar's Ittihad to goalless draw Wihdat meet Riyadh, Mdyah face Muharraq today

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Cup champions Al Faisali Tuesday held Qatar's Al Ittihad to a goalless draw on the second day of the 7th Arab Cup Winners' Cup Championship which kicked off yesterday with eight teams taking part.

The result was not disappointing taking into consideration the Qatari team that includes three professional players. However Al Faisali lost their chances of scoring a possible win.

In an earlier match, Olympic Khreibkeh of Morocco beat Al Mawdah of Sudan 2-0.

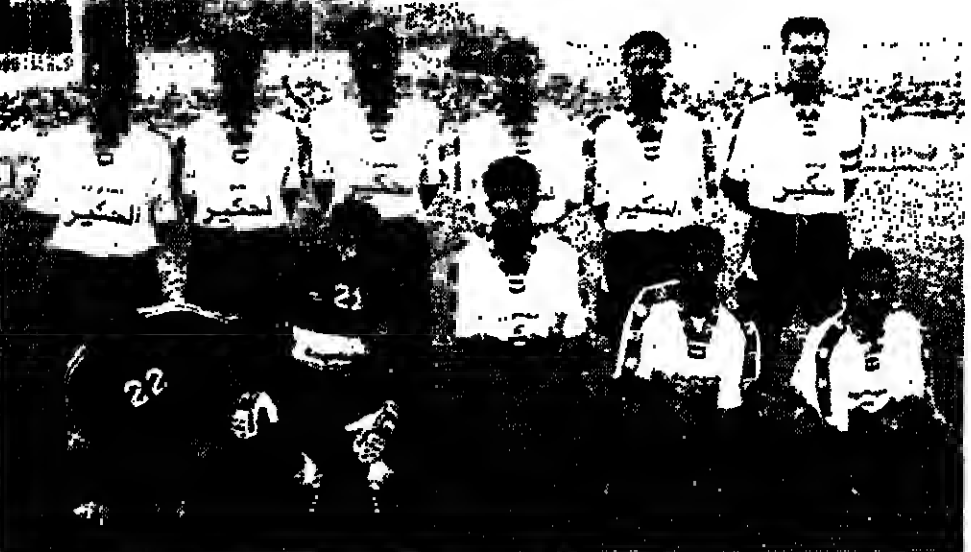
In today's matches Al Riyadh of Saudi Arabia meet Al Wihdat while Olympic Mdyah meet Al Muharraq.

Al Riyadh beat Al Muharraq of Bahrain 2-0 in a crucial match on the opening day. Hosts and Jordan soccer league champions Al Wihdat lost 2-1 to Olympic Mdyah of Algeria in the opening match of the tournament.

The participating teams have been divided into two groups. Group 1 includes hosts Al Wihdat, Al Muharraq of Bahrain, Al Riyadh of Saudi Arabia, and Olympic Mdyah of Algeria. Group 2 includes Al Ittihad of Qatar, Jordan's Al Faisali, Al Mawdah of Sudan, and Olympic Khreibkeh of Morocco.

Participating teams have never before won the title or even runner up position. Past champions, notably teams from Egypt and Tunisia, are missing the championship especially the championship record holders, Olympic Baidawi of Morocco, who won the title a record three consecutive times.

While Al Wihdat are playing the event for the first time, Al Faisali's participa-



Al Riyadh of Saudi Arabia, Al Wihdat's opponents in today's game

tion set a championship record with their fourth appearance in the event. (Al Ramtha were the first to represent Jordan in 1993).

Meanwhile, the coaches seminar organised by the Arab Soccer Federation (ASF) concluded Tuesday. ASF officials stressed the importance of such seminars which would shape the future of Arab soccer and enable it to reach higher standards.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, chairman of the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF), said Jordan's hosting of this elite soccer competition is an important milestone.

He noted that the Kingdom, despite its limited capabilities and facilities, was adamant to host such tournaments that are bound to upgrade the game.

He also said he hoped the two Jordanian teams would fare well in the competition despite the large gap in experience and preparations.

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It was erroneously stated in an advertisement appearing on page 8 of the Jordan Times issue of May 14, that the deadline for obtaining the tender documents was 30/6/1996.
The deadline should read 30/5/1996.

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Major medical congress opens

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday attended the opening session of the First International Medical Congress, held at the Palace of Culture. Taking part in the four-day conference, organised by the Royal Medical Services (RMS), are 1,000 participants from 22 Arab and foreign countries.

Addressing the opening session, RMS Director Major General Yousef Qoussous said King Hussein's patronage of the congress demonstrates the support the King gives to the medical profession. The King's unwavering support and the special attention he directs to the profession was behind the medical advances Jordan has achieved in such a short time, Gen. Qoussous said.

Dr. Qoussous said the RMS had been training its medical cadres in the various specialisations to enable them to cope with the challenges of the age and the information revolution. He noted that the RMS provides medical coverage to 40 per cent of Jordan's population.

The conference will discuss over 130 scientific papers covering the latest scientific developments in various medical specialisations. Thirty-five renowned specialists from the U.S., the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Greece along with renowned Arab doctors are participating in the congress.

King Hussein conferred Jordan's Independence Medal of the First Order on David Barrett, William Castelli and A.J. Tajik from the Mayo Clinic in the U.S. who are taking part to the conference.

Dr. Qoussous presented the congress' trophy to King Hussein.

The opening session was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabani, Royal Court Chief Awn Khawneh, the speakers of the Upper House of Parliament, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the King's advisors, cabinet ministers, Parliament members and senior military officials in addition to heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Jordan.

King Hussien urges Civil Aviation Authority to maintain high standards

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday urged the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to maintain high standards of performance in the areas of air navigation and safety.

During a visit to CAA, King Hussein stressed the need to develop Aqaba airport to serve as a regional airport serving the countries of the region.

King Hussein, who was accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabani, stressed the importance of supporting the CAA to enable it play an active role in the field of airline industry.

He noted the importance of staff training, acquiring modern equipment and revising navigation regulations in

order to be able to maintain the high standards of Jordanian airports, and ensure the highest degree of air navigation safety.

King Hussein listened to a briefing by the acting CAA director general, Abdul Qader Dalgamouni, on the CAA's personnel, the status of Jordanian airports and the authority's plans to develop navigation regulations to be in conformity with the International Civil Aviation Organisation regulations, which call for using satellite technology in the area of air navigation and communication. CAA department directors also briefed King Hussein on their departments' plans to keep abreast with the progress being made in civil aviation.



FIRST LADIES MEET: Her Majesty Queen Noor and other first ladies, including Queen Fabiola of Belgium (third from left) and Queen Sophia of Spain (fourth from right), attending the 1996 meeting of the International Steering Committee for the Economic Enhancement of Rural Women in Amman, post for a photograph on Tuesday Photo by Crystal)

Lebanese woman wanted in 'baby-for-sale' scandal

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan has issued an international arrest warrant for a Lebanese woman allegedly implicated with Sri Lanka's former consul here in a "baby-for-sale" scandal, security officials said Tuesday.

Andrea Alfred Bustani, a long-time secretary of the consul, Tawfiq Abu Khajil, was in Lebanon when the main defendant was detained in March.

"Bustani had left for Lebanon to attend her mother's funeral. But when she heard that the case unfolded, she opted to take refuge there," one source said. "She is accused of being an accomplice."

Mr. Abu Khajil was arrested on charges of selling unwanted new-borns from Sri Lankan housemaids to Euro-

pean couples. He has denied all charges in initial investigations before the prosecutor general.

Mr. Abu Khajil, whom the Sri Lankan government has since sacked, is accused of sheltering pregnant, unmarried maids until they conceived.

According to police investigations, Mr. Abu Khajil and his secretary are alleged to have sold about 35 Sri Lankan infants to European couples for a total of \$250,000 over the past five years.

The scandal broke out after police intercepted a Dutch couple about to fly back home with an illegally adopted Sri Lankan infant. A criminal court on Sunday started examining the case and a trial is to open soon.

PNA police beating of press photographer sparks protest

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — An AFP staff photographer was detained and badly beaten by Palestinian security agents in Gaza City who accused him of promoting a negative image of Palestinians by publishing a photograph of children washing a donkey.

The Union of Arab Journalists and AFP on Tuesday made formal complaints to the Palestinian authorities about the attack which was also condemned by the Information Ministry of the Palestinian National Authority.

Fayez Nouredin, a 33-year-old Palestinian, was picked up at the AFP office in Gaza City Monday morning by three armed agents of the intelligence service headed by Colonel Amin Al Hindi.

He was repeatedly kicked and beaten in the agents' vehicle and later in an interrogation office of the intelligence service before being

released 10 hours later.

He underwent a medical examination at Gaza City's Shifa hospital Monday night where doctors noted in a written report that he was suffering from "multiple contusions," notably on the back and legs.

In a statement replying to AFP's protest, which called the attack "unacceptable," the ministry said it had been "surprised by the arrest."

The Union of Arab Journalists in Gaza published a statement "firmly condemning the attack on our colleague Fayez Nouredin of AFP."

"Such treatment violates all the laws in force. We categorically condemn it and appeal to President Yasser Arafat, the members of the government and legislative council to take the necessary measures to ensure the freedom of the press and the protection of journalists," said the statement.

Mrs. Arafat: Peace is irreversible

PARIS (R) — Suha Arafat, wife of President Yasser Arafat, said on Tuesday that Palestinians hoped Shimon Peres would win Israel's May 29 elections, but the peace process would continue if the right-wing Likud party topped him.

She spoke at a ceremony marking the departure of a supply convoy for Gaza which was attended by Israel's ambassador to UNESCO until he walked out in protest at comments she made about Israel's policies towards Palestinians.

"Yes, we prefer (Prime Minister) Peres to win because he is a man who is open and who the Palestinians know and who is a good person to negotiate with," Mrs. Arafat said at the headquarters of the UNESCO.

"But peace was an international decision and there will not be an end to peace if (Likud leader Benjamin) Netanyahu wins."

"The peace agreements reached in Oslo were international peace agreements which ultimately committed the United States, Russia and the other great countries of the world to the peace process. If the Likud returns to power, nothing will stop. They will be obliged to continue the peace process," she said.

Mrs. Arafat spoke at the departure of a truck convoy carrying 200 tonnes of humanitarian supplies for Gaza gathered by the French welfare group Equilibre.

The convoy was organised with the backing of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and support from Leah Rabin, widow of assassinated Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin. She was not present.

Israeli Ambassador UNESCO Avi Shohet walked out of the ceremonies when Mrs. Arafat denounced the closure of the Palestinian-ruled Gaza Strip and the West Bank, by Israel, after suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Nearly 60 people died in the attacks.

"We are fed up with being the victims of collective punishments," she said. "Many children are dying because medical supplies are not reaching them because of the closure."

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Norwegian prince, princess ask for privacy

OSLO (AFP) — Norway's Crown Prince Haakon and his sister Princess Maertha Louise asked the Norwegian press Monday to respect their privacy, especially now that they have both decided to pursue studies abroad. "We too have a right to privacy, and you are stepping across an invisible line when you offer money to have tip-offs about our private lives," the 22-year-old prince told the Norwegian press corps. "We regard most Norwegian press people with respect, and hope to avoid all kinds of rumours about our private lives. We know that you will write about us, but please, let us live a normal life when studying abroad," he said.

The strong plea came after the prince and princess jointly announced that they would both begin studies abroad, he in the United States and she in the Netherlands, this autumn. Prince Haakon will enter the University of California at Berkeley as an undergraduate in political science in August after completing a practice year at the Naval Academy in Bergen this summer. He will live on campus, but said he may eventually move to a private flat.

Princess Maertha Louise, 24, will end her traineeship as a physiotherapist in Maastricht in the Netherlands, but hopes to combine her studies with horse riding — she will bring her favourite horse Midnight Bay with her.

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Danish children send 'world's' biggest Xmas card

COPENHAGEN (R) — Danish children have made what they say is the world's biggest Christmas card to publicise the national congress of Denmark's Father Christmas Guild. The giant card, measuring more than four metres square, needed 1,600 crowns (\$270) worth of stamps to be delivered to guild Chairman Ole Lundsgaard in a special post office truck. Berlingske Tidende newspaper reported. The guild, whose 52 members will compete in chimney-climbing events and discuss other job-related topics at their congress in July, plan to submit the card to the Guinness Book of Records.

Chinese 'flower bath' wails under criticism

BEIJING (AFP) — A Chinese public bathhouse, which was criticised for decadence after offering punters the luxury of wallowing in milk rather than water, has faded little better with its second innovation, a "flower bath." The bathhouse in the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing was forced to close its "milk bath" service last month, after local authorities pronounced it a waste and "promoting an unhealthy social value." Not to be discouraged, the managers of the bathhouse then introduced the "flower bath" which uses expensive aromatic powders imported from Japan, the Yangcheng Evening News reported Tuesday. In a bid to head off renewed criticism of practising elitism, the management offered the new service free of charge to local employees who had been designated model workers. However, the plan backfired after the workers — having availed themselves of the offer — promptly denounced the "flower bath" for being just as bourgeois as its milky predecessor. "We hope they can find a service more suited to the demands of common people," the newspaper quoted one model worker as saying.

Women back Peres; youth favour rival

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres is finding more favour with women voters in the run-up to May 29 elections while right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu is picking up the youth vote, according to a poll published Tuesday.

A total of 49 per cent of women pledged their vote to Labour leader Peres compared to 46 per cent for Mr. Netanyahu. But 50 per cent of male voters are behind the Likud leader against 45 per cent for Mr. Peres, according to the opinion poll published in the daily Yediot Aharanot.

Mr. Netanyahu finds more support among younger voters, with 52 per cent of those

aged 18 to 22 and 50 per cent of those under 45 backing him for the post of prime minister, which will be elected separately from parliamentary seats for the first time.

Mr. Peres is most popular among older voters, with 68 per cent of those over 66 supporting him.

Mr. Netanyahu is attracting 62 per cent of the vote among the Sephardic community, Jews originating from the East, while Mr. Peres is more popular among the Ashkenazis, Jews from Eastern Europe, attracting 56 per cent of their votes compared to Mr. Netanyahu's 39 per cent.

Mr. Peres receives 60 per

cent support from non-religious voters, but the vast majority of strictly religious Jews, 80 per cent, are behind Mr. Netanyahu.

More educated voters tend to support Mr. Peres, while the Likud leader is far more popular in towns with a lower standard of living such as Jerusalem unlike the more affluent Tel Aviv which is behind Mr. Peres.

The survey by the Dabaf Institute polled around 2,200 Jewish voters. The 80,000 Israeli-Arabs, who make up 13 per cent of the electorate, were not included.

Mr. Peres has a slender lead of around four to six points over Mr. Netanyahu.

Seminar discusses role, ethics of media in humanitarian work

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The role of the information media, the ethics of journalism and how to get across the right message while covering human suffering are the key themes for a two-day regional seminar which opened here on Tuesday.

Entitled "The International Movement of the Red Cross Red Crescent, the Humanitarian Field and the Media," the event, the first of its kind to be held in Jordan, is seen as an important opportunity for journalists in the region in general to have a close view of the issues involved in humanitarian work, particularly in situations of conflict.

The gathering is organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross in cooperation with the International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ).

The main issue that dominated Tuesday morning debate was how do the media go about presenting humanitarian issues and what any information organisation or individual could do to highlight

the importance of respecting international law while also ensuring that media coverage does not take precedence over human needs.

The debate could not come up with definite answers to any questions, although the one element that got high attention was what many deemed as the Western domination of the international media scene.

Also discussed was "the double standard" of the Western media when it comes to covering issues of direct relevance to the Third World where vested Western interests are key influential factors.

As was generally expected, the forum tended to indirectly focus on the standards and ethics of journalism and Western media approach to humanitarian issues rather than limiting itself to the linkage between the media and humanitarian work around the world.

Actual mechanisms to tackle that linkage are expected to be proposed in Wednesday's session of the seminar, ICRC officials said. In a pre-conference statement, the ICRC said the

seminar "primarily aims at sensitising participating media representatives to different aspects of humanitarian action in general."

It said particular focus would be given to "a certain politicisation of humanitarian issues which in these last years has been increasing been reflected in the mediatisation of humanitarian services."

Also explored will be "approaches for appropriate media reactions and reporting on the human suffering in times of armed conflicts, with a view to avoiding any ready-made clichés or preconceived judgements which might affect the plight of the victims."

The ICRC is also seeking to highlight the role of the international movement of the red cross and red crescent and to clear "possible misconceptions about its approach to humanitarian situations versus those of other humanitarian organisations, U.N. agencies and human rights organisations."

Among the topics raised by speakers and debated by

(Continued on page 7)



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